Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

VA Handbook 6320
Transmittal Sheet
May 18, 2026

VA CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURES

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE**. This handbook implements policies contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Directive 6320, Correspondence Business Rules and Policy.

2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES**. This handbook introduces procedures, standards, and guidance for implementing VA's correspondence procedures found in VA Directive 6320. In particular, this handbook provides guidance to Administrations and Staff Offices for creating, submitting, and closing VA correspondence that requires review and/or signature by the Secretary (SECVA), Deputy Secretary (DEPSECVA), or Chief of Staff (COSVA).

3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** Office of the Executive Secretary (EXECSEC) is also referred to as the Executive Secretariat (001B).

4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE**. VA Directive 6320, Correspondence Business Rules and Policy.

5. **RESCISSION(S)**. Not applicable.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

/s/
Alisa Stack
Executive Secretary

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic only

VA CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURES

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VA CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURES

1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this handbook is to provide procedures for correspondence packages that require review and/or signature by SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA.

2. **SCOPE.** This handbook is applicable Department-wide and broadly directs how to prepare and submit written materials for decision by the SECVA, DEPSECVA, and COSVA to EXECSEC. The handbook expands on the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Directive 6320, Correspondence Business Rules and Policy (https://www.va.gov/vapubs/search_action.cfm?dType=1).

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES.** In addition to the responsibilities detailed in VA Directive 6320, the following responsibilities are required to support the requirements detailed in this handbook.

   a. **Executive Secretary** must:

      (1) Control and track correspondence requiring signature from SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA, correspondence from other Departments and Agencies to SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA, and other correspondence with Department-level interest.

      (2) Develop and implement all policies and procedures for executive correspondence through this handbook and VA Directive 6320.

      (3) Create and monitor correspondence training platforms, excluding those delegated to offices of primary responsibility.

      (4) In partnership with the Office of Information and Technology (OIT), maintain a Department-wide correspondence management system as the Department's official system of record.

      (5) Maintain a central resource site with current guidelines, VA Executive Secretariat Style Guide (EXECSEC Style Guide), templates, reference information, and the list of top managers and authorized signers.

      (6) Review and update this handbook as necessary.

   b. **Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials** must:

      (1) Ensure Administrations and Staff Offices adhere to the standards and timelines addressed in this handbook, VA Directive 6320, and the EXECSEC Style Guide

(https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacoooes/SitePages/Correspondence%20Information.aspx).

(2) Ensure correspondence management tracking system users complete required training related to obtaining and using an account for the correspondence management system, VA Integrated Enterprise Workflow Solution (VIEWS) Case and Correspondence Management System (CCM).

(3) Ensure all correspondence representatives and subject matter experts receive Action Officer training and other Administration or Staff Office training, as appropriate, on preparing correspondence.

(4) Designate at least two Correspondence Liaisons within their Administration or Staff Office.

(5) Designate one, but no more than three, VIEWS CCM Office Coordinators (VOC) within their Administration or Staff Office.

(6) Designate at least one authorized signer who approves actions for the Administration or Staff Office.

c. **Administration and Staff Office Correspondence Liaison**s must:

(1) Serve as the initial points of contact for correspondence within their organization.

(2) Oversee the correspondence process from creation to closure within their organization.

(3) Receive, assign, delegate, and monitor all case tasks assigned to their organization.

(4) Serve as the subject matter expert for correspondence procedures within their organization.

(5) Relay correspondence-related information and updates from EXECSEC to their organization.

(6) Update the online list of top managers and authorized signers posted on the EXECSEC SharePoint site (https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacoooes).

4. PROCEDURES.

General Writing

Staff offices and Administrations will use the EXECSEC Style Guide, Compliance Made Easy (CME), when possible, and plain language in drafting responses. The Plain

Writing Act of 2010 (http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ274/pdf/PLAW-111publ274.pdf) mandates that Federal agencies use plain language in their communications to improve public understanding. Use the Federal Plain Language Guidelines (https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language). Key principles of plain language are below.

1. **Know Your Audience**: Understand who your readers are and what they need to know. Tailor your content to their level of understanding and interests.

2. **Use Everyday Words**: Choose common, simple words over complex or technical terms unless necessary. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

3. **Be Concise**: Write clearly and directly. Use short sentences and paragraphs and limit each sentence to one idea. Aim for an average of 20 words per sentence.

4. **Organize Logically**: Present information in a logical order. Start with the main point, followed by supporting details. Use headings, bullet points, and lists to break up text and make it easier to scan.

5. **Active Voice**: Use active voice to make your writing more engaging and direct. For example, instead of saying "The report was written by the team," say "The team wrote the report."

6. **Visual Aids**: Incorporate visuals like charts, tables, and images to enhance understanding and retention of information.

In preparing your document, ensure it is compliant with section 508 (https://digital.va.gov/section-508/) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

CME is a tool that helps VA staff apply the most up-to-date EXECSEC Style Guide rules to correspondence before submitting it for approval for decision or signature. VA employees can download CME from the Software Center.

All written materials will include a complete VA Form 0907, Summary and Approval Sheet, and correspondence analysts must ensure it is the current version of the form, which is posted on the EXECSEC SharePoint site. All VA Forms referenced in this handbook can be found on the VA Forms webpage (https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms).

Best practices:

- Put the bottom line up front in a decision memorandum.
- Work backward from the due date to stay on schedule.
- Contact collaborators and colleagues early in the process to define roles and responsibilities and set deadlines with each other.
- Know whether your action requires notification to Congress and include the notification letter(s) with the decision memorandum.
- Use VA Form 0907 to explain any background or unique aspects of an action.

- Proofread.

VA Integrated Enterprise Workflow Solution (VIEWS) Case and Correspondence Management System (CCM)

VA maintains correspondence cases in the Department's correspondence management system, VIEWS CCM. All packages submitted to EXECSEC must have an associated VIEWS CCM case.

Records in VIEWS CCM are subject to the Privacy Act, which protects personally identifiable information maintained in a system of records, including how information is collected, used, disclosed, stored, and disposed. Administrations and Staff offices must:

- Mark VIEWS CCM cases sensitive when they involve personal identifiable information/personal health information and only give access to those with a need to know.
- Do not include sensitive information in VIEWS CCM Subject Line or Requested Activity fields.
- Only access VIEWS CCM case records where you have a need to know.
- Be intentional with your email habits. For more information, email security is covered by VA Directive 6301.

VIEWS Office Coordinators (VOC)

VOCs are the primary VIEWS CCM points of contact for employees in their respective organizations for the administrative purposes listed below. They are also responsible for participating in user-acceptance testing and providing guidance and training to VIEWS CCM users within their organizations by:

- Provisioning new users;
- Modifying user accounts;
- Deactivating user accounts;
- Ensuring an organization's VOC list is current; and
- Providing VIEWS CCM updates to their respective organizations, including technical issues, process changes, and system updates.

VIEWS CCM User Training

New VIEWS CCM users must complete the following Talent Management System (TMS) courses before their accounts are provisioned:

- Introduction to VIEWS Case and Correspondence Management (VA 4527960).
- Working with Case Tasks in VIEWS Case and Correspondence Management (TMS 4527957).

- Managing Cases in VIEWS Case and Correspondence Management (VA 4527958).

Additional courses related to VIEWS CCM are also available:

- VIEWS Case and Correspondence Management for Leadership (VA 4527961).
- Creating Reports in VIEWS Case and Correspondence Management (VA 4527959).

EXECSEC provides monthly VIEWS CCM training sessions. Users may find additional information regarding the training on the EXECSEC SharePoint site.

For the latest VIEWS CCM updates and information, visit the VIEWS Resource Center (https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/oitspmvrc).

A current list of VOCs is found on the EXECSEC SharePoint site. Contact your Administration or Staff Office VOC for assistance.

VIEWS CCM Change Control Board (CCB)

To meet VA's needs for an end-to-end correspondence management lifecycle, the VIEWS CCM system must maintain correspondence management services in a stable, reliable environment while empowering all staff and offices with the flexibility to request enhancements that meet their business needs.

The CCB is responsible for reviewing and approving functional change requests to the VIEWS CCM system. The board is comprised of subject matter experts (SME) and managers who represent various perspectives from within VA. The CCB's mission is to decide whether to implement proposed changes to the information system, underlying business processes, and governance strategies.

The CCB employs a formalized Change Management process to evaluate the changes required and prioritized by VA, which minimizes the risk of disruption and rework caused by failed change requests. The CCB completes these goals by identifying and analyzing potential risks or issues in accordance with General Privacy and Security Practices.

Coordination

The coordination process is an important part of providing the SECVA, DEPSECVA, and COSVA clear, well-evaluated positions for decision. This process ensures senior officials have optimal information to make decisions that benefit Veterans.

Administrations and Staff Offices are responsible for coordinating review and concurrence for packages before the action for approval.

Proof of concurrence is required on all packages. Acceptable forms of concurrence are an email from an authorized signer, concurrence by an authorized signer noted in a VIEWS CCM task, signature by an authorized signer on a memo stating the concurrence, or signature by an authorized signer on VA Form 4265, Concurrence and Summary Sheet. The authorized signer must explicitly indicate concurrence or approval. For instance, an email message from an authorized signer must state “concur” or “approved.” These documents are part of VA’s correspondence record, so they must be clear and stand the test of time.

Concurrence with comment or a non-concurrence must include the Administration and or Staff Office’s rationale for its position. As with a concurrence, a disagreement is part of VA’s records, and it is important for VA leadership to consider different viewpoints in making decisions. The leaders of Administrations and Staff Offices should use all tools at their disposal resolve disagreements; however, if the senior leadership of an organization cannot agree with another organization’s proposal, the owner or originator of the proposal will include both points of view or recommendations in the memo and VA Form 0907 to escalate the issue for decision. Again, to provide VA and Veterans the best possible decisions, all VA staff must communicate with each other, seek to resolve differences, and clearly record those differences for resolution.

Each Administration and Staff Office is responsible for tracking its own work. As a best practice, correspondence analysts should establish a system for tracking and reporting on tasks to ensure differences are resolved within deadlines.

Authorized Signers

Each Administration or Staff Office must have at least one authorized signer who will approve actions for the Administration or Staff Office. When an authorized signer concurs on an action or sends it to the EXECSEC, he or she is validating that the information in the action is correct, aligned with VA policy, and meets the correspondence management and other requirements, such as human resources or financial management.

The head of an Administration or Staff Office is usually an authorized signer and is ultimately responsible for the content of the action. For that reason, the head of an Administration or Staff Office should occasionally review his or her choice of authorized signers and select individuals he or she is confident can sign for the organization.

The procedure for adding an authorized signer to the EXECSEC Authorized Signers list is:

(1) Each Administration and Staff Office emails a request to EXECSEC Intake at ExecSecIntake@va.gov to add or change a designated authorized signer.

(2) For a planned change of authorized signers, the Administration and Staff Office must notify EXECSEC Intake at ExecSecIntake@va.gov in writing 5 business days before the change will occur. The notification must include the name of the authorized signer to be removed or added.
(3) For an unplanned change of authorized signers, each Administration and Staff Office must notify EXECSEC Intake at ExecSecIntake@va.gov in writing the same day on which the change occurs. The notification must include the name of the authorized signer to be removed or added.
(4) If an Administration or Staff Office would like more than four authorized signers, the Administration or Staff Office must provide EXECSEC with a memorandum for COSVA approval with:
- Justification;
- Duration; and
- Name and position of the additional authorized signer(s).

(5) EXECSEC will coordinate approval with the COSVA for requests of over four Authorized Signers and will notify the Administration or Staff Office of approval or disapproval with a rationale from COSVA.
(6) When filling a vacancy, designation of an Authorized Signer may be on a rotational basis. Each Administration and Staff Office is responsible for notifying EXECSEC of these rotation changes.

Intake

For SECVA, DEPSEC, and COSVA approval, Administrations and Staff Offices must submit all documents to EXECSEC electronically. Submissions must include all applicable documents and concurrences in VIEWS CCM. There are rare cases which require a paper folder (such as awards) in addition to the electronic materials in VIEWS CCM; however, a paper folder is an exception. When submitting electronic packages to the Office of the Executive Secretary, responsible offices must comply with the EXECSEC Naming Convention and Tabbing requirements for the package. The Naming Convention ensures that reviewers know which documents are for action and submission to SECVA, DEPSECVA, and COSVA.

Electronic package submission requirements can be found on the EXECSEC SharePoint site.

Overview of Intake for Actions Other Than Congressional Letters

The originating office creates the VIEWS CCM case.

When drafting and coordination are complete, the originating Administration or Staff Office will create a task in VIEWS CCM to EXECSEC and email the proposed action and all attachments to EXECSEC Intake (ExecSecIntake@va.gov). A VIEWS CCM task and email is a necessary redundancy so that the Executive Writer assigned to review the case knows exactly which documents need to be reviewed and forwarded to Office of Secretary of Veterans Affairs (OSVA) front office leadership for approval or signature.

EXECSEC assigns the action in VIEWS CCM to an Executive Writer.

Within 2 business days of receipt of the action, the Executive Writer will complete his or her review and return the action for correction or submit it to the Deputy Executive Secretary for review and approval. The Executive Secretary is final approval authority for actions to leave the Office of the Executive Secretary for review and approval in the following order:

- Deputy Chief of Staff
- Chief of Staff
- Deputy Secretary
- Secretary

Throughout the review process, the Executive Writers and other officials may have questions or edits. The originating Administration or Staff Office should be prepared to respond to those questions.

Naming Convention and Tabbing for All Incoming Actions

Tabs in an e-package, which are also included on the EXECSEC SharePoint site, are as follows:

- The first document of the package is always VA Form 0907 and is not labeled as a tab.
- TAB 1 is always the document for signature or approval. If there are attachments to the document for signature, the document for signature will be TAB 1A. The attachments will be labeled TAB 1B, TAB 1C, and so forth. For example, in the case of a Congressionally Mandated Report (CMR), TAB 1A will be the transmittal letters to Members of Congress. TAB 1B will be the report. TAB 1C will be the cost report.
- TAB 2 is always the document that initiates the case, such as incoming correspondence, the public law requirement for a CMR or other report, or the invitation for a hearing.
- TAB 3 is background materials or concurrence and will vary from case-to-case.
    - TAB 3 for CMRs is always the previous CMR, if any.
    - TAB 3 can be any supporting documents, like a legal reference or a previous memorandum on the same topic.
    - TAB 3 will be concurrences if there are no supporting documents.
- TAB 4 will be the concurrences, if the package has supporting documents at TAB 3.

The elements of the EXECSEC naming convention for these documents, which can also be found on EXECSEC SharePoint, are as follows.

- **VA Form 0907:**
    - For signature documents: (1) 0907, (2) VIEWS CCM number, (3) signer title, and (4) short case name.

    - For approval documents: (1) 0907, (2) VIEWS CCM number, (3) approver's title, and (4) short case name.
- **Signature documents:** (1) the VIEWS CCM number, (2) signer title, and (3) short case name.
- **Approval documents:** (1) the VIEWS CCM number, (2) approver's title, and (3) short case name.
- **Enclosures:** (1) VIEWS CCM number, (2) type "Encl," and (3) short name of the document. (Note: If SECVA signs the enclosure such as a certificate, then "SECVA" will follow the VIEWS CCM number.)
- **Supporting documents:**
    - Initiating and background: (1) VIEWS CCM number, (2) type "Incoming," "Requirement," "Background," or other identification name, and (3) short name of document.
    - Concurrence: (1) VIEWS CCM number, and (2) type "Concurrence" and office abbreviation.

Appendix A gives examples of documents named following the EXECSEC naming convention and examples with TABs applied for electronic submission to EXECSEC.

Electronic Submission of Materials to EXECSEC

After the documents are tabbed and ready for electronic submission, the office prepares the e-package for submission to EXECSEC as follows:

- Attach the tabbed documents to an email.
- For the subject line of the email, use FOR REVIEW + VIEWS CCM No. + Signer or Approver Title + Short Case Name.
- If the package is for expedited review, notify EXECSEC by labeling the case appropriately in the subject line (this must be accompanied by the VA Form 0907 with proper justification for requesting an expedited review):

  HOT FOR REVIEW + VIEWS CCM No. + Signer or Approver Title + Short Case Name

- In the email message, notify EXECSEC that the case is ready for EXECSEC review and provide any additional context deemed necessary.

Email the e-package to EXECSEC (ExecSecIntake@va.gov).

In addition, the submitter uploads the email to VIEWS CCM under Attachments and create a case task to OSVA-001B Executive Secretariat to "Provide Review."

Task the case to EXECSEC (OSVA-001B Executive Secretariat) in VIEWS CCM.

NOTE: EXECSEC reviews documents against the EXECSEC Style Guide and Directive 6320 criteria to provide them to the SECVA, DEPSEC, and COSVA. If you are seeking coordination on a substantive matter from offices in the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, task the Office of Administrative Operations at OSVA-00A1A in VIEWS CCM.

Executive Writer Review

Executive Writers will review packages for Style Guide and Directive 6320 compliance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Correct grammar, spelling, and proper use of acronyms;
- Use of plain language;
- Use of active voice;
- Ensuring the response is complete, concise, and addresses concerns and does not provide more information than requested;
- Proper coordination; and
- Correct signature block and addressee.

All materials will be organized and tabbed with the proper naming conventions and will have a complete and editable current VA Form 0907, which is available on the EXECSEC SharePoint site and above. Packages will have acceptable proof of concurrence that are not older than 90 calendar days from the date the Administration or Staff Office submits the package to EXECSEC.

Types of Documents and Packages

See Appendix C for guidance preparing specific recurring packages to the Office of the Secretary.

Dispatch

Once SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA approves or disapproves an action, such as signing an award or letter, an EXECSEC staff member will dispatch the signed documents with related enclosures/attachments to the originating office. EXECSEC will upload the signed VA Form 0907 and signed documents to the VIEWS CCM case.

Upon dispatch, EXECSEC will close the VIEWS CCM cases owned by EXECSEC. Administrations and Staff Offices must close cases they own.

Dispatch requirements vary by package type. If an office has special instructions for dispatch, include them in VA Form 0907.

White House Case Mail

The White House (WH) Case Mail Program Office, part of EXECSEC, manages mail from constituents who write to the President. This function is separate from case mail sent to VA from Members of Congress. The Office of Presidential Correspondence (OPC) manages case mail within the White House staff. OPC sorts case mail and distributes correspondence according to the types of inquiry or concern. The types of inquiries are:

- “Red Dot:” Correspondence that indicates suicide or self-harm and requires immediate attention;
- VBA: Benefits-related issues;
- VHA: Health care-related issues; and
- Tiger Team: Other VA-related issues

Privacy and Security

When processing correspondence, VA employees are responsible for protecting privacy. Employees should access cases only as necessary for completing job-related tasks.

Unauthorized attempts or acts to: (a) locate, view, access, upload, change, or delete information within VIEWS CCM; (b) modify the system; or (c) obtain any information for unauthorized or personal use are strictly prohibited. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552a(i)(1)-(3) and U.S.C. 552a(g)(2)(B), such improper attempts or acts are subject to action that may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

APPENDICES
A. Examples of Naming Convention and Tabbing for E-Packages

Naming Convention Awards (Signature Package):	Tabbed Awards (Signature Package):
0907 6694562 SECVA NASDVA 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations 6694562 SECVA Dir 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations 6694562 SECVA Gov 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations 6694562 Incoming 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations 6694562 Background 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations 6694562 Concurrence OPIA	0907 6694562 SECVA NASDVA 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations TAB 1A 6694562 SECVA Dir 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations TAB 1B 6694562 SECVA Gov 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations TAB 2 6694562 Incoming 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations TAB 3 6694562 Background 2022 Pillar Award Recommendations TAB 4 6694562 Concurrence OPIA

Naming Convention CMR (Signature Package):	Tabbed CMR (Signature Package):
0907 6249726 SECVA CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 6249726 SECVA CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 6249726 Encl CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 6249726 Encl Cost CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 6249726 Requirement PL 115-55 6249726 Previous CMR Aug 2021 6249726 Concurrences All	0907 6249726 SECVA CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 TAB 1A 6249726 SECVA CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 TAB 1B 6249726 Encl CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 TAB 1C 6249726 Encl Cost CMR Appeals Modernization Feb 2022 TAB 2 6249726 Requirement PL 115-55 TAB 3 6249726 Previous CMR Aug 2021 TAB 4 6249726 Concurrences All

Naming Convention Membership (Signature Package):	Tabbed Membership (Signature Package)*
0907 6765932 SECVA NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 SECVA DUSH Memo NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 SECVA Attach Decision Paper NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 Attach Member Bios NRAC 2022 6765932 Attach Profile Sheet NRAC 2022 6765932 SECVA Appointment NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 SECVA Encl Certificate Appointment 6765932 Encl Charter NRAC 2021 (VIEWS 4271835) 6765932 Encl FACA Ethics 6765932 SECVA Reappointment NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 SECVA Termination NRAC Membership Mar 2022 6765932 SECVA Encl Certificate Termination 6765932 Authority 5 USC App 2 6765932 Background Membership Balance Plan NRAC Jan 2022 6765932 Concurrence ACMO 6765932 Concurrence ACMO 6765932 Concurrence OSVA	0907 6765932 SECVA NRAC Membership March 2022 TAB 1A 6765932 1 SECVA DUSH Memo NRAC Membership Ma 2022 TAB 1A 6765932 2 SECVA Attach Decision Paper NRAC Membership Mar 2022 TAB 1A 6765932 3 Attach Member Bios NRAC 2022 TAB 1A 6765932 4 Attach Profile Sheet NRAC 2022 TAB 1B 6765932 1 SECVA Appointment NRAC Membership Mar 2022 TAB 1B 6765932 2 SECVA Encl Certificate Appointment TAB 1B 6765932 3 Encl Charter NRAC 2021 (VIEWS 4271835) TAB 1B 6765932 4 Encl FACA Ethics TAB 1C 6765932 SECVA Reappointment NRAC Membership Mar 2022 TAB 1D 6765932 1 SECVA Termination NRAC Membership Mar 2022 TAB 1D 6765932 2 SECVA Encl Certificate Termination TAB 2 6765932 Authority 5 USC App 2 TAB 3 6765932 Background Membership Balance Plan NRAC Jan 2022 TAB 4A 6765932 Concurrence ACMO TAB 4A 6765932 Concurrence ACMO TAB 4C 6765932 Concurrence OSVA * Use numbers following VIEWS No. within TAB groups to order documents.

Naming Convention Testimony (Approval Package):	Tabbed Testimony (Approval Package):
0907 6646242 OSVA HVAC Health 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing 6646242 OSVA Testimony HVAC Health 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing 6646242 Incoming Invite HVAC Health 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing 6646242 Concurrence OCLA 6646242 Concurrence OGC 6646242 Concurrence OSVA	0907 6646242 OSVA HVAC Health 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing TAB 1 6646242 OSVA Testimony HVAC Health 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing TAB 2 6646242 Incoming Invite HVAC 02022022 Vet Centers Hearing TAB 3A 6646242 Concurrence OCLA TAB 3B 6646242 Concurrence OGC TAB 3C 6646242 Concurrence OSVA

B. Sample OIG response

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: (Signature Date)

From: (Appropriate Level Director or Assistant Secretary) (Office Code))

Subj: Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report, (TITLE) (VIEWS XXXXXXXX)

To: Assistant Inspector General for (department) (office code)

1. Thank you for the opportunity to review the report on a (TITLE). The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) concurs with recommendation one and submits the attached action plan.

2. VHA is committed to (what we are committed to). This report highlights an opportunity for us to strengthen awareness on this topic and (insert specific area identified)

3. There were # recommendations made to VA. VA concurs with recommendation(s) x, non-concurs with recommendation y, and concurs in principle with recommendation z.

4. Comments regarding the contents of this memorandum may be directed to the (Administration or Staff Office point of contact)

Signature

Attachment

VA FORM
Jul 2023 **2105**

Administration or Staff Office name
Action Plan

(Title of Report), Project Number XXXX-XXXXX-XX-XXXX

Recommendation 1: Recommendation as written in the draft report.

(Administration or Staff office) Comments: Concur in Principle, Concur, or Non-Concur. If Concur in Principle or Concur, include a summary of action that will be or has been taken. If Non-Concur, state reason for non-concurrence.

Status: In Progress or Completed Target Completion Date: (Month and Year)

C. Types of Documents and Packages

(1) Advisory Committee Management Office (ACMO) Packages

An advisory committee is comprised of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills to augment the VA's knowledge and skills.

ACMO provides letters and certificates, if applicable, for SECVA signature. The types of letters vary based on the committee action (member appointment, reappointment, expired terms, resignation, and/or non-selected).

Required documents for ACMO Packages

- Completed current version of the VA Form 0907, Summary and Approval Sheet.
- Completed current version of the VA Form 4265, Concurrence and Summary Sheet.
- Proof of concurrences.
    - All packages are required to have the appropriate concurrence from sponsoring office, ACMO Director, and ACMO Senior Advisor. ACMO membership packages require the White House Liaison concurrence.
- Memorandum from sponsoring office to SECVA.
- Biographical summaries of members.
- Decision page for SECVA signature.
- Committee Charter.
- Membership Balance Plan.
- Ethics Rules (as supporting documentation or enclosure).
- Letters for signature (appointment, reappointment, expired terms, resignation, and/or non-selected).
    - Letters will vary based on the committee action. The package will be arranged in the e-folder or hard copy folder in the order listed above and in accordance with the EXECSEC Naming Convention and Tabbing.
- Certificates for signature (once ACMO submits a package, an ACMO staff member will deliver the necessary certificate or certificates to EXECSEC).

Templates for letters and memoranda and other forms are found on the EXECSEC SharePoint.

(2) All-Employee Emails

SECVA, DEPSECVA, and COSVA use all-employee messages for internal communication on issues of importance to all employees.

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) drafts and coordinates the annual SECVA Veterans Day message no later than November 1 each year. Other messages are at the discretion of the official signing the message.

Required documents for all-employee emails:

- VA Form 0907,
- Properly formatted draft of the message in Microsoft Word,
- Concurrences, and
- Optional relevant background information.

To request an all-employee message from the SECVA, DEPSECVA, and COSVA, Program Offices shall:

1. Create a case in VIEWS CCM.
2. Draft the message and use the coordination processes to provide a signature-ready message to the EXECSEC that includes the formatted draft message, appropriate concurrences, completed VA Form 0907, and any relevant background information.
    a. Coordination must include Assistant Secretary for OPIA and the General Counsel. OPIA will obtain Speechwriter's input and review as needed.
3. Provide a recommendation with rationale for why SECVA, DEPSEC, or COSVA should be the sender.

To ensure compliance with VA policies, if an Under Secretary wants to send a message to all his/her organization's employees, the Under Secretary will:

a. Draft the message;
b. Explain the purpose and intended audience in the 0907;
c. Coordinate the message using VIEWS CCM; and
d. When coordination is complete, send to EXECSEC to obtain COSVA approval action in compliance with VA Directive 6320.
e. Send message only after COSVA approval.

(3) Awards

Secretary Honor Awards are an integral part of VA's recognition and awards program and are available in a variety of forms to recognize a wide range of one-time or career achievements. The employee must still be employed at VA before VA processes and approves an award.

The Secretary's Honor Awards include:

- Exceptional Service Award
- Meritorious Service Award
- Distinguished Career Award (DCA)
- Award of Valor
- Certificate of Commendation
- Certificate of Appreciation
- I CARE Award
- Length of Service 50 Years or More

Required documents for Award Packages are shown below.

- Completed VA Form 0907
- Completed VA Form 4659, Incentive Awards Recommendation and Approval, with justification (optional but not required for Length of Service Awards of 50 Years or more).
- Proof of Concurrences (such as VA Form 4265)
- Completed VA Form 0235, Security Check for Candidate Requiring Approval of the Secretary.
    - Required for every VA employee submitted for an award signed by the Secretary.
- Chronology of Service (for DCA and retirement certificates for Length of Service 50 Years or more)
- OAWP Clearance Report
    - OAWP will not have information on any candidate general schedule (GS)-13 or below.
    - GS-14s may or may not have a report, depending on their role.
    - Above GS-14 will have an OAWP clearance report, and it should be requested and included.
- Printed Certificates
    - Administrations and Staff Offices are responsible for providing EXECSEC with the printed award.
    - Certificate must include affixed seal.
    - Award certificate date cannot be pre- or post-dated.

More information about the Secretary's Honor Awards can be found at the

Service Center SharePoint
(https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OCHCOHRSC/SitePages/SecretaryHonorAwards.aspx?OR=Teams-HL&CT=1731509712937&xsdata=MDV8MDJ8fGZlMjUwYTkxMmYyYjQ0MTdlY2NkMDhkZDRiOTIyZTc1fGU5NWYxYjIzYWJhZjQ1ZWU4MjFkYjdhYjI1MWFiM2JmfDB8MHw2Mzg3NDk4MTMzOTAyNjYzODV8VW5rbm93bnxUV0ZwYkdac2IzZDhleUpGYlhCMGVVMWhjR2tpT25SeWRXVXNJbFlpT2lJd0xqQXVNREF3TUNJc0lsQWlPaUpYYVc0ek1pSXNJa0ZPSWpvaVRXRnBiQ0lzSWxkVUlqb3lmUT09fDB8fHw%3d&sdata=VDVYVWdqSDRNNnBudDRZTy9weUR0M25pRm5ZbUhMemtEQkVyMHBsV3l6OD0%3d&clickparams=eyAiWC1BcHBOYW1lIiA6ICJNaWNyb3NvZnQgT3V0bG9vayIsICJYLUFwcFZlcnNpb24iIDogIjE2LjAuMTczMjguMjA2ODgiLCAiT1MiIDogIldpbmRvd3MiIH0%3D).

(4) Congressional Letters

Congressional Letters can be simple or complex.

A simple letter is a letter that pertains to a topic or issue that can be answered by a single Administration or Staff Office. Simple letters have a 15-business day deadline for response.

A complex letter is a letter that pertains to one or more topics or issues that require coordination between two or more Administrations or Staff Offices. Complex letters have 30-day deadlines.

Best practices:

- Be brief. Understand the writer's intent and address it. That is, answer the question asked.
- Be accurate. Answer with the information available at the time. That is, do not wait for circumstances to change or provide out-of-date data or information.
- Be on time.
- Use plain language.
- Look at press releases, recent testimony, and/or CMRs, and ask questions of your leadership before you start the coordination process.
- If it makes sense to cite recent VA accomplishments, those can be found here: https://department.va.gov/veteransfirst/
- Contact your colleagues early to discuss an approach and ensure everyone meets the deadline.
- Use case notes in VIEWS CCM to keep everyone updated on issues and progress.
- When managing investigatory or acquisition-sensitive information, it should be standard practice to grant access only in accordance with the information's sensitivity level and in compliance with applicable privacy and security standards.

Following are the processes for two types of Congressional Letters.

a. Congressional Letters Managed by Administrations and Staff Offices

Administrations and Staff Offices handle Congressional letters that are from Members of Congress who are not on VA oversight committees (House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs (HVAC and SVAC)).

Step 1: Initiation

1. EXECSEC receives incoming letter from the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA) via email.

Step 2: Assignment

1. EXECSEC determines whether the letter will be managed by an EXECSEC Writer or be assigned to an Administrations or Staff Offices based on Committee assignment, topic, and complexity.
2. EXECSEC assigns the case to the responsible organization to "prepare response" in VIEWS CCM and sends an email (attaching the incoming letter) with direction on signature level and due date.

Step 3: Responsible Organization Prepares the Response for EXECSEC Review

1. Each Responsible Organization will follow internal correspondence process for preparing and packaging the response for EXECSEC review. This process will include obtaining concurrences from relevant Staff Offices including, but not limited to, OCLA and Office of General Counsel, preparing the VA 0907, and finalizing the response and enclosure (if applicable).
2. In responses to letters received from multiple Members of Congress, except for responses to Committees, the Administration or Staff office should address the response to one of the co-signers of the letter with the other Members of Congress courtesy copied. Do not prepare separate letters for each Member of Congress.

Step 4: Submission to EXECSEC for Review

1. The Administration or Staff Office will create a "Provide Review" task to "OSVA-001B Executive Secretariat" in VIEWS CCM if an approval or signature from SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA is required.
2. The package will include a completed current version of VA 0907, proof of concurrence from authorized signers, the incoming or initiating document, documents for review and/or signature, and any background or supporting documents. These documents will be named and tabbed appropriately and comply with the current EXECSEC Style Guide.
3. The Administration or Staff Office will email the e-package to EXECSEC (ExecSecIntake@va.gov).
4. The Administration or Staff Office will close their "Prepare Response" task in VIEWS CCM.

Step 5: EXECSEC Final Review and OSVA Approval/Signature

1. Once EXECSEC receives the incoming package for review, it is assigned to an Executive Writer.
2. Once the Writer completes the review, he/she will submit the package to EXECSEC Final Review. The Executive Secretary or Deputy Executive Secretary completes EXECSEC final review and submits the package for SECVA, DEPSEC, and COSVA review.
3. If there are questions during the review process, EXECSEC will communicate with the Administration or Staff Office.

Step 6: Dispatch

1. Once the letter is signed, an EXECSEC staff member will date, scan, and upload the signed PDF document in VIEWS CCM. The staff member will email the signed PDF letter, attachments, and incoming letters to OCLA using the “VAHill_LettersDispatch” email group.
2. The EXECSEC staff member will copy the Executive Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Executive Assistant, and other EXECSEC team members (as directed).
3. Administrations and Staff Offices will coordinate with OCLA for any letters that require burning CDs or other electronic materials.

b. Congressional Letters Managed by EXECSEC

EXECSEC manages letters from the Chairman or Ranking Member of oversight and appropriations Committees and on letters on selected sensitive issues.

On complex letters managed by EXECSEC, the Executive Writer may conduct a collaboration call to provide guidance, set deadlines, and ensure a comprehensive answer to the question asked.

Step 1: Initiation

1. EXECSEC receives incoming Congressional letters from OCLA.

Step 2: Assignment

1. EXECSEC staff receives the incoming letter, creates a VIEWS CCM number, uploads the letter, and assigns it to an EXECSEC Executive Writer by email and changes the VIEWS CCM Case Owner to the Executive Writer's name.
2. The EXECSEC staff member sends an email to all VA Correspondence Liaisons to notify organizations of the incoming letter with the name of the Executive Writer responsible for the response. Incoming matters that may contain sensitive protected information should be reviewed by a VA Privacy Officer and distributed only in accordance with the information's sensitivity level and in compliance with applicable privacy and security standards.
3. The Executive Writer will update the status in VIEWS CCM and change the "Case Classification" to "Complex" or "Simple" letter, populate the "Case Notes" with the status of the letter, and update the "Current Activity" field.
4. EXECSEC staff will send an email to Correspondence Liaisons to determine if their organization has equity in the response and who in their organization should prepare the response or answer to a specific question or questions.
5. Correspondence Liaisons will complete the assessment questionnaire and email the Executive Writer by 10 a.m. (eastern) the next business day if their organization will be involved in the response. Correspondence liaisons are not required to submit SME names in their response.

   (<u>Note</u>: Skip to Step 4 if Collaborative Call is not needed.)

Step 3: Scheduling a Collaborative Call

1. Executive Writers will schedule collaborative calls within 2 business days of receiving their assignment.
2. Once Correspondence Liaisons respond that their organization will be involved in the response, the Executive Writer will update the VIEWS CCM status to "Collaboration Call," and invite offices to the call. The invitation will include the incoming letter, Collaborative Planning Worksheet, and draft response template.
3. The Executive Writer will add the relevant Correspondence Liaison

groups that are involved and responsible for preparing the response to the "Case Team," in VIEWS CCM including EXECSEC.
4. The Correspondence Liaisons will ensure SMEs are prepared to participate in the Collaboration Call on the date/time scheduled.

Step 4: Conducting the Collaborative Call

1. The Executive Writer will take attendance.
2. The Executive Writer will conduct the Collaborative Call and take notes.
3. Correspondence Liaisons should also take notes for their organizations.
4. At the end of the Collaborative Call, the Executive Writer will send the completed Collaborative Planning Worksheet (which summarizes the discussion and includes the responsible organization, Correspondence Liaison, SME, and due date for each question), the response template, and an enclosure template (if one is needed) to everyone on the TEAMS invite.
5. The Executive Writer will upload a copy of the Collaborative Planning Worksheet in VIEWS CCM.

Step 5: SME Data

1. The Executive Writer will update the Case "Status" to "SME Data" in VIEWS CCM.
2. The Executive Writer will create a "Provide Information" task to the appropriate organization's Correspondence Group in VIEWS CCM with collecting SME data.
3. Correspondence Liaisons will follow up with SMEs to ensure their organizations meet deadlines.
4. Correspondence Liaisons will upload their organizations' consolidated data in VIEWS CCM using the response template provided by the Executive Writer in Step 3 (and enclosure, if applicable) and notify the Executive Writer in VIEWS CCM by listing the action in the response note and closing their task. Although Administrations and Staff Office leadership may have their own requirements, EXECSEC does not require concurrence from an authorized signer at this step.

Step 6: Drafting

1. The Executive Writer will update the case "Status" to "Writer Draft."
2. The Executive Writer will draft the response based on input received from the identified Correspondence Liaisons.
3. If SME data are missing, the Executive Writer will contact the Correspondence Liaison and/or Correspondence Liaison Group to notify them that information is missing or if clarification is needed.
4. The Correspondence Liaisons will follow up with the identified SME.
5. The Executive Writer will submit all specific questions through the Correspondence Liaisons, who will work directly with the SME and respond to the Writer.

Step 7: SME Review

1. The Executive Writer will update the Case “Status” to “SME Review.”
2. The Executive Writer will upload the draft response under “Attachments” in VIEWS CCM and create a “Provide Review” Task to relevant Correspondence Liaison Groups and/or Correspondence Liaisons for SME Review.
3. The Correspondence Liaisons will provide SME edits/comments to the Executive Writer by the designated due date. Although Administrations and Staff Office leadership may have their own requirements, EXECSEC does not require concurrence from an authorized signer at this step.
4. Once the Executive Writer has received SME edits from Correspondence Liaisons, the Executive Writer will finalize the response and prepare it for Final Approval (concurrence by an authorized signer) from relevant offices.

Step 8: Final Approval

1. The Executive Writer will update the case “Status” to “Final Approval.”
2. The Executive Writer will upload the final draft to VIEWS CCM under “Attachments” and create a “Provide Concurrence” task to Correspondence Liaisons for final approval/concurrence by an authorized signer from relevant offices by the designated due date.
3. Correspondence Liaisons will submit the acceptable proof of concurrence into the system (acceptable proofs of concurrence are listed in VA Directive 6320).
4. Once the Executive Writer receives final approvals/concurrences from relevant organizations, the writer prepares the draft for the Office of General Counsel (OGC) approval.

Step 9: OGC Final Approval

1. The Executive Writer will update the Case “Status” to “OGC Final Review.”
2. The Executive Writer will upload the OGC Final Approval draft under “Attachments” in VIEWS CCM and create a “Provide Concurrence” Task to the “OGC-02 Office of General Counsel” for OGC Final Approval/concurrence by an authorized signer by the due date.
3. Once the Executive Writer receives OGC’s Final Approval/concurrence, the Executive Writer will finalize the response for EXECSEC review.

Step 10: EXECSEC Final Review and Signature

1. The Executive Writer will update the case “Status” to “EXECSEC Final Review.”
2. The Executive Writer will update “Case Notes” and “Current Activity” in VIEWS CCM.
3. The Executive Writer will submit the correspondence package to EXECSEC leadership for final review.
4. The Executive Secretary or Deputy Executive Secretary completes

EXECSEC final review and submits the package to the Deputy Chief of Staff for review.

Step 11: Dispatch

1. Once the letter is signed, an EXECSEC staff member will date, scan, and upload the signed PDF document in VIEWS CCM. The staff member will email the signed PDF letter, attachments, and incoming letters to OCLA using the “VAHill_LettersDispatch” email group.
2. The EXECSEC staff member will copy the Executive Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Executive Assistant, and other EXECSEC team members (as directed).
3. Administrations and Staff Offices will coordinate with OCLA for any letters that require burning CDs or other electronic materials.

(5) Memoranda

Memorandum to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

The template for a memorandum to the VA enterprise is on the EXECSEC SharePoint site. As with other actions for decision, the draft memorandum to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials requires a VA Form 0907, concurrences, and, based on the issue or topic, may need a separate decision memorandum and background information.

After signature, the EXECSEC sends the signed memorandum to Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials via email and will assign it for information or action in VIEWS. All materials related to the memorandum are dispatched to the originating office.

Decision Memoranda

Staff Offices and Administrations who need to send a decision memorandum to obtain the COSVA's, DEPSECVA's, or SECVA's decision on a topic can find the proper memorandum template on the EXECSEC SharePoint site.

The appropriate official must sign decision memoranda prior to forwarding for EXECSEC final review. During the Executive Writer's review, he or she may send signed memoranda back to the originator if the Executive Writer catches an error. EXECSEC staff will not make changes to signed documents.

In cases of recommended reorganization or staffing changes, in addition to impacted offices, the originator must obtain concurrence from the Assistant Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, Office of Management, and OGC.

Equitable Relief

Equitable Relief is a legal remedy that allows SECVA to correct an injustice to a claimant, where VA is not otherwise authorized to do so within the scope of the law.

Administration and Staff Offices must include who made the error and what action was taken to address the issue. The memorandum will be prepared for SECVA signature, and the originating office must include background information about who made the error and what management did to fix the problem so it will not recur.

Because VA must prepare an annual report to Congress on all authorizations for equitable relief, it is important that the words "Equitable Relief" be included in the case subject and the signature level be correctly captured as "SECVA."

(6) Questions for the Record (QFR)

Congress occasionally submits written QFRs following a hearing in which VA participates. QFRs are formal, post-hearing questions from Congress to VA that become part of the hearing record. QFRs provide lawmakers with an opportunity to seek clarification, request additional data or information, or cover topics raised during a hearing.

Like letters, it is important that VA be accurate and on time with answers to QFRs. Use the same best practices for QFRs that that this handbook outlines for letters.

Required documents for QFR Packages

- Completed VA Form 0907.
- Incoming QFRs.
- VA's Response to the QFRs.
- Concurrences required from all Administrations and Staff Offices that provided responses, OCLA, and OGC.
- Some packages can include the Hearing Invitation and Testimony for additional background information, but they are not required.

The QFRs require Office of Management and Budget approval after SECVA approves VA's response. Therefore, this information must be noted on VA Form 0907.

Formatting

- The Header is single spaced, bold font, and centered with the following:
    - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
    - Questions for the Record
    - Committee name
    - Legislative Branch Chamber (United States Senate or U.S. House of Representatives)
    - Hearing type
    - Date of Hearing (two returns between the last line of the heading and the date of the hearing)

- Body is single-spaced, flush left, and uses block paragraphs in the VA question and answer (Q&A) format.
- Begin body of document one return (hit Enter key twice) from last line in heading.
- Type the following and underline: Questions for the Record from INSERT Member of Congress' title (that is, Senator or Representative) and first and last name. This format will be done for every set of questions asked by a different Member of Congress (see example below.)
- Insert one return (hit Enter key twice).
- Begin Q&A format.

- Insert page numbers formatted according to the EXECSEC Style Guide.
- Following the last line on the last page, hit return four times and insert:

  Department of Veterans Affairs
  Month XXXX

Example:

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Questions for the Record Submitted to
[Insert Witness' Name and Title]
from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
<United States Senate or
U.S. House of Representatives>
[Oversight Hearing on <Insert Name of the Hearing>]

(Date of the Hearing)

Questions for the Record from Senator (or Representative) Jane Smith:

Question 1:

VA Response:

(7) Federal Register Notices and Rules

The Federal Register is the official journal of the Federal Government of the United States. It contains Government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices. It is published every weekday except on Federal holidays. It provides legal notice of administrative rules and notices and Presidential documents in a comprehensive, uniform manner. Generally, these are published to allow the public to view or comment on changes within the Federal Government.

VA's Office of Regulatory Oversight and Management (ROM) is responsible for coordinating the publication of rules and Federal Register Notices within VA.

Required documents for Federal Register Notices (FRN) and Rules

- Completed VA Form 0907.
- Copy of the notice or rule for review.
- Any communications requirements (can be included on VA Form 0907).
- Concurrences from OGC, ROM, Assistant Secretary for OPIA, Assistant Secretary for OCLA, and the sponsoring office. Concurrences be from the principal (such as Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary).
- Cost analysis, if applicable.
    - See the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) M-25-20, Guidance Implementing Section 3 of Executive Order 14192, Titled "Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation" (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/M-25-20-Guidance-Implementing-Section-3-of-Executive-Order-14192-Titled-Unleashing-Prosperity-Through-Deregulation.pdf) for significant guidance documents.
    - Rules will include the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA).
- Any pertinent background information deemed necessary.

EXECSEC requires ROM's concurrence on rules, FRNs, and System of Record Notices (SORN).

The general guidance is as follows:

For Rules: In the contact information section, keep POC's name, title, office, organization, and phone number (email is optional). There is no need for "Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, 20420."

Federal Register Notices and System of Record Notices: In the contact information section, keep POC's name, title, office, organization, and phone number or email. There is no need for "Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, 20420."

ROM forwards rules to EXECSEC. Generally, minimal editing is needed for these packages as they are formatted to comply with the Office of Federal Register's (OFR) requirements for printing and posting online (note: OFR's publishing guidelines differ

from the VA Style Guide). If editing is necessary, the reviewer should contact and coordinate any changes with ROM at Regulations@va.gov. ROM will coordinate edits with OGC and the relevant Program Office, as appropriate.

All FRNs and rules should be submitted through ROM prior to EXECSEC review to ensure consistency in language used in FRNs and rules.

All FRNs and rules must not have blank dates. In consultation with ROM, instead of a blank date, please use the following language: "...no later than [Insert date **xx** days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]."

The number of days represented by "xx" could be 30 days, 45 days, or the number of days determined by the originating Administration or Staff Office. Whatever the number is, it should be inserted into the FRN prior to submission to EXECSEC.

Concurrences for FRNs expire after 90 days, and concurrences for rules packages expire after 6 months.

The signing authority must be formatted as follows:

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs approved this document and authorized submission to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Approved:

_____ _____

Douglas A. Collins Date
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

If you have general questions, please email Regulations@va.gov.

(8) Investigatory Reports

An investigatory report is a formal document produced as part of an administrative investigation. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Office of Special Counsel (OSC), Office of the Medical Inspector (OMI), and Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) produce investigatory and audit reports.

EXECSEC receives these reports in portable document format (pdf) and requests a Word document to use for corrections. If the Executive Writer identifies formatting or other edits are necessary, the Executive Writer will return the report to the originator to make the edits.

Note: All investigative reports require concurrence from the Principal (such as, Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary, General Counsel). Administrations and Staff Offices cannot delegate concurrence to an authorized signer.

GAO Reports

GAO serves as the investigative arm of Congress. GAO conducts audits and evaluates executive branch agencies at the request of Congress or on the initiative of the Comptroller General. GAO reports provide Congress and heads of executive agencies with fact-based, non-partisan information that can be used to improve government.

At the end of a GAO review (also known as an engagement), as required by Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, GAO provides agency officials with the opportunity to review and comment on a draft product before it is issued.

Pursuant to P.L. 115-414, when GAO issues a final report that contains recommendations, the agency is required to submit a written statement on the action taken or planned on recommendations before the 181st day after the date of the final report–this is known as the 180-day Update letter.

OCLA is responsible for coordinating GAO activities within VA.

Required documents for GAO Packages

- **VA Form 0907**
  - Person listed as originator is the POC responsible for obtaining all needed concurrences before providing to OSVA for review.
- **TAB 1** Word version of document to be signed/approved and enclosure. (Note: The font for both the letter to GAO and supporting enclosure should be Arial 12. No page numbers should be added to the enclosure).
- **TAB 2** GAO Draft or Final Report
- **TAB 3** Proof of VA Office/OGC/Senior Advisor concurrence

Office of Inspector General Reports

OIG is an independent oversight body established to promote accountability and efficiency within government agencies, organizations, or programs. The VA OIG performs audits, inspections, investigations, and reviews that improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of VA.

Similar to other documents for review by the COSVA, DEPSECVA, and SECVA, responses to the OIG are due to EXECSEC 10 business days before the document needs signature. If VA cannot provide a complete response to a draft OIG report by the OIG's deadline, the responsible Administration or Staff Office will request an extension.

Draft OIG Report responses require COSVA approval when the draft report includes the following:

- Secretary priorities (see also the VA Strategic Plan);
- If there is a recommendation for or finding involving the SECVA, DEPSECVA, and/or COSVA;
- Reports that involve more than one Administration or Staff Office; and/or
- The Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary determines there is VA leadership interest.

If none of the above conditions are met, the response and signature level remain at the Administration or Staff Office level. For example, annual or routine audits remain at the Administration or Staff Office level. An Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary may request Chief of Staff, Deputy Secretary, and/or Secretary review of a report, as needed. The Executive Secretary will work with Administrations and Staff Offices to determine the level of required approval as needed.

If the OIG's recommendations include more than one Administration or Staff Office, the organization that was the primary focus of the investigation and/or has the majority of recommendations or findings will coordinate across organizations to provide a combined draft response for the COS. The lead office will initiate the coordination process in VIEWS CCM and provide the draft report to other organizations within three business days of receipt. If there is a Department-level recommendation, the lead office will coordinate a consolidated response and provide the draft report to the Office of the Executive Secretary at least 10 business days before the document requires a signature in VIEWS CCM.

The response will include the following:

- A copy of the draft OIG report;
- A Memorandum or Memoranda to the OIG signed by the appropriate leader of each Administration or Staff Office; and
- An action plan for each recommendation.

Draft report responses require concurrence from an authorized signer of each Administration or Staff Office, the appropriate Senior Advisor (if applicable), and the Office of General Counsel. Informational copies will be shared with OCLA and OPIA.

A template for the draft response memorandum and action plan are located in Appendix C.

Office of Special Counsel Reports

EXECSEC is responsible for reviewing and dispatching OSC reports. Handling of the OSC reports includes participating in weekly telephone conferences with the responsible organization and requesting extensions as needed. OSC reports are sensitive and must be handled as such, especially when email is involved.

Documents required for OSC reports:

- Completed VA Form 0907.
- Incoming referral letter or other request from OSC.
- Transmittal letter prepared for signature with the OSC file number
    - Report with cover sheet with the OSC file number.
- If the letter is for an extension request, the letter will include a comprehensive explanation about why an extension is needed and which extension request it is (first, second, or third, for example), if applicable.
- Concurrences required from impacted Administrations and Staff Offices responsible for the investigation, OCLA, and OGC.

Once OSC reviews the report and determines that it meets the statutory requirements, OSC sends a notification letter to SECVA (via EXECSEC) stating such. SECVA also receives a copy of the letter that OSC provides to the President. When received, EXECSEC uploads the notification letter and enclosure or enclosures to the VIEWS CCM case.

Office of the Medical Inspector

OMI is an integral element of VHA's oversight and compliance program, reporting to the Under Secretary for Health (USH). The senior physicians, nurses, and health care administrators of OMI conduct quality of care and patient safety investigations at the direction of the USH, and in response to whistleblower allegations received from OSC, OAWP, or OIG.

After obtaining all concurrences listed below, OMI forwards reports to EXECSEC for review, approval, and signature by SECVA.

Required documents for OMI Report Packages:

- Completed VA Form 0907.

- Incoming referral letter (Formal OSC Referral only) or email request (OSC Informal Referral).
- Cover letter (Formal OSC Referrals Only).
- Report.
- Concurrences.

Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Special Reviews Division Reports

OAWP submits complete, final reports with all background material to EXECSEC Intake at ExecSecIntake@va.gov for EXECSEC review.

- If the Executive Writer finds errors or noncompliance with the EXECSEC Style Guide, the Executive Writer will edit the document(s) and return them to the appropriate OAWP staff member to review and accept the corrections. Respecting the independence of OAWP work, EXECSEC staff members will not alter the substantive content of any OAWP documents.
- Due to the oversight nature of OAWP's work, and the statutory requirement of providing its reports and recommendations to the Secretary, concurrences from Administrations or Staff Offices referenced in or the subject of OAWP's reports are not required, nor is OGC concurrence, unless specifically requested by the Secretary.
- If EXECSEC staff identify an administrative or technical issue with the PDF, they will contact OAWP. If OAWP agrees to the change, they will modify the PDF and return it to EXECSEC.

Any OAWP documents containing whistleblower identities, and all OAWP Reports of Investigation (ROI) and supporting or related documents such as exhibits to the ROI, should not be uploaded to VIEWS CCM.

(9) Congressionally Mandated Reports

Congressionally Mandated Reports (CMR) are reports that are incorporated within legislation that has become enacted into law. The legislation provides the requirements, timelines, responsible agency, and to whom the agency should send the report. The frequency of completing these reports can be a one-time requirement, quarterly, semi-annually, annually, or bi-annually.

Required documents for CMRs

- Completed VA Form 0907.
- Transmittal/cover letters.
- CMR (as an enclosure to the letters).
- Cost estimate (as an enclosure to the letters).
- Legislative authority.
- Previous report (unless it is the first report).
- Concurrences required from impacted Administrations and Staff Offices, Senior Advisors, OCLA, and OGC.

Upon submission to EXECSEC, the originating office will provide OPIA an informational copy via a VIEWS CCM task.

The originating office is responsible for sending the report to the Government Publishing Office (GPO). Reports must be provided to the GPO 31 to 60 days after submission to Congress, and after reviewed by the Freedom of Information Act office.

Formatting

The transmittal letters follow the same formatting as Congressional letters. The layout of the reports may vary but should have consistent formatting throughout the document. The cost estimate will be labeled appropriately with “Enclosure” in the upper right corner of the document.

(10) Testimony

Written Congressional testimony is a formal statement submitted by VA to Congressional oversight committees in advance of a hearing. The testimony typically outlines the perspective, experiences, and information VA wishes to present regarding a specific issue or legislative matter under consideration by Congress.

Required documents for Testimony Packages

- Completed VA Form 0907
- Testimony
- Hearing invitation
- Concurrences required from impacted Administrations and Staff Offices, Senior Advisors, OCLA, and OGC.

Once SECVA or other appropriate official clears the testimony, OCLA sends it to OMB.

Formatting

- The Header is single spaced, bold font, all capitalized, and centered with the following:
    - STATEMENT OF
    - WITNESS NAME
    - WITNESS TITLE
    - WITNESS OFFICE
    - WITNESS ORGANIZATION
    - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
    - BEFORE THE
    - COMMITTEE NAME
    - NAME OF THE CONGRESS CHAMBER (UNITED STATES SENATE OR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES)
    - Date of hearing (two returns between the last line of the heading and the date of the hearing.)
- Body is flush left with indented paragraphs and single spaced.
- Begin body of document one return (hit Enter key twice) from last line in header.
- Defer to the Administration or Staff Office on document organization but ensure sections are formatted consistently throughout.
- Insert page numbers formatted according to the EXECSEC Style Guide.

(11) Personal Letters

If requested by COSVA, DEPSECVA, or SECVA, EXECSEC staff may write personal letters.

If an office requests a personnel letter from one of these three officials, that organization must create the draft, create a VIEWS CCM case, conduct appropriate coordination, and follow the standards in Directive 6320 and this Handbook.

EXECSEC supports three special programs for the Secretary:

- Centenarian letters
- Scouting letters
- Condolence letters

EXECSEC staff does not respond to correspondence from the general public. EXECSEC staff routes mail from the public to the Administration or Staff Office in which the topic applies. When a letter received is personal in nature and addressed to SECVA, DEPSECVA, or COSVA, the EXECSEC staff member provides the letter to that principal’s Executive Assistant.