

WASTE PREVENTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This directive establishes Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) waste prevention and recycling program policy supplementing the waste prevention and recycling policies contained in VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management Program.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This directive outlines the policies, principles, and other key elements necessary to facilitate VA's continual improvement of management and performance with respect to prevention, management and reporting of waste and recycling.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Assistant Secretary for Management (004), Office of Asset Enterprise Management (044), Green Management Program Service (044E).
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management Program, dated January 15, 2010.
- 5. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 0063, Waste Prevention and Recycling Program Handbook.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
Roger W. Baker
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

/s/
W. Todd Grams
Executive in Charge, Office of Management
and Chief Financial Officer

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WASTE PREVENTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

a. The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to fulfill President Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans. The goal of the Green Management Program Service within VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM) is to keep our promises to Veterans through a sustainable approach to operations that makes more resources available for Veterans' care. The purpose of this directive is to support and expand the programmatic policies of VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management Program; VA Directive 0064, Environmental Management Systems; and VA Handbook 0064, Environmental Management Systems Procedures. This directive establishes VA policy, roles, and responsibilities with respect to waste prevention and recycling in support of the mission and goal.

b. VA will make every effort to ensure environmental compliance is optimized through robust environmental management systems (EMS), with the ultimate goal of becoming a fully sustainable organization. All VA facilities are required to be covered by an EMS in accordance with VA Directive 0057, VA Directive 0064, and VA Handbook 0064.

c. This directive establishes policies for VA Administrations and staff offices for implementing the environmental compliance requirements of VA Directive 0057 as it relates to waste prevention and recycling. This directive is also designed to facilitate the development of uniform internal procedures for waste prevention and recycling across the Department. Specific procedures are found in VA Handbook 0063, Waste Prevention and Recycling Program.

2. SCOPE

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

3. POLICY

VA will ensure that it meets or exceeds the requirements of all applicable executive orders and Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations. It is VA policy to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials and waste, and to maintain life-cycle cost-effective waste prevention and recycling programs to the maximum extent practicable. VA Administrations and staff offices may retain and use revenue generated by waste prevention and recycling programs at

their respective facilities in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. See VA Handbook 0063, Sec. 3(g).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

VA recognizes that achieving successful environmental programs depends on the efforts of every VA employee. VA is actively working to ensure that every person is aware of his or her role in the success of environmental efforts. This section outlines the responsibilities and business processes for staff offices/officials.

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

- (1) Monitoring VA's activities to implement waste prevention and recycling;
- (2) Executing programs and reporting progress to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Federal Environmental Executive of the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE), Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other applicable entities;
- (3) Establishing a cross-functional, Department-wide VA Environmental Management Task Force, with appropriate representatives necessary to expeditiously meet the waste prevention and recycling goals; and
- (4) Requesting sufficient funds to ensure Department-wide implementation of waste prevention and recycling programs, including but not limited to funding for Administration and staff office environmental staff.

b. **Director of OAEM.** The Director of OAEM as the VA Senior Sustainability Officer (SSO) is responsible for:

- (1) Overseeing the development and implementation of procedures and processes related to waste prevention;
- (2) Working with counterparts in other VA organizations to ensure waste prevention and recycling issues are addressed in all programs;
- (3) Resolving policy differences among organizations regarding environmental compliance issues, strategies, or procedures as they relate to waste prevention and recycling;

(4) Developing and issuing guidance to ensure Department-wide compliance with waste prevention and recycling policies;

(5) Preparing Departmental waste prevention and recycling reports in accordance with applicable Federal environmental laws, regulations, executive orders, and VA directives;

(6) Measuring Department-wide waste prevention and recycling and coordinating the annual reporting submission to CEQ, OFEE, OMB, EPA, and other applicable entities; and

(7) Conducting oversight activities to ensure that VA implements an effective waste prevention and recycling program and makes continual improvements to address enforcement actions and related audit findings.

c. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials.

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials are responsible for:

(1) Establishing overall policy and guidelines to implement waste prevention and recycling programs within their management areas consistent with this directive and VA Directive 0057;

(2) Ensuring that waste prevention and recycling programs conform to the policies and goals of this directive, and are developed and routinely evaluated, and that there are formal processes in place for identifying and correcting program issues;

(3) Ensuring that measures for successful implementation of waste prevention and recycling programs are included in performance standards and performance evaluations of senior Administration and staff office officials and other personnel, as appropriate;

(4) Requesting sufficient funds in Administration and staff office budgets to staff and support positions and all programs related to waste prevention and recycling;

(5) Informing the VA SSO of the status of their Administration's or staff office's waste prevention and recycling programs as requested or required.

(6) Ensuring appropriate and sufficient staffing and resources to support the work of the VA Environmental Management Task Force and implement the waste prevention and recycling policies and goals of this directive.

(7) Ensuring acquisition, construction, and logistics staff incorporate waste prevention and recycling policies into contracts, specifications, and training as applicable.

(8) Meeting regular reporting requirements and responding to information requests requested from CEQ, OMB, OFEE, EPA, OAEM, and other entities regarding reports on waste prevention and recycling;

(9) Conducting oversight activities to ensure that facilities have effective waste prevention and recycling programs;

(10) Providing internal policy and guidance to the respective Administration or staff office, which may include Administration-level handbooks or facility-specific guidance;

(11) Ensuring qualified staff support (such as trained environmental management service staff or Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) coordinators and their counterparts in other Administrations and staff offices) is available and known to each facility to support management in implementing waste prevention and recycling policies;

(12) Providing all personnel (including contracting officer technical representatives) with guidance and training on waste prevention and recycling; and

(13) Ensuring that each facility has appropriate staffing to support and execute these policies including, but not limited to:

(a) A full-time, dedicated Recycling Coordinator at each Veterans Health Administration medical center/health care system;

(b) A full time or collateral-duty Recycling Coordinator at each Veterans Benefits Administration Area Office; and

(c) A full-time or collateral-duty Recycling Coordinator at each National Cemetery Administration Memorial Service Network.

4. REFERENCES

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

(1) Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §13101 et seq. and subsequent amendments, which establish policy to reduce the amount of pollution through cost-effective changes in production, operation, and raw materials use. The amendments modified the reporting provisions under the Toxic Chemical Release Reporting rules to include detailed information and trends on quantities of chemicals released to the environment that were not treated on site or off site; quantities of chemicals used for energy recovery on site and off site; quantities of chemicals recycled on site and off site; quantities of chemicals treated on site and off site; and quantities of chemicals released to the environment as a result of remedial actions, catastrophic events, or one-time events not associated with production processes.

(2) Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. §6901 et seq. (1976) and subsequent amendments, which give EPA the authority to control the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA also set forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid wastes.

(3) Public Law 103-329. Section 608 authorizes Federal agencies to receive and use funds resulting from the sale of materials recovered through recycling or waste prevention program.

(4) Federal Acquisition Regulation. From the definition in the regulation itself... "1.101 Purpose. The Federal Acquisition Regulations System is established for the codification and publication of uniform policies and procedures for acquisition by all executive agencies. The Federal Acquisition Regulations System consists of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), which is the primary document, and agency acquisition regulations that implement or supplement the FAR. The FAR System does not include internal agency guidance of the type described in 1.301(a)(2)." The complete FAR is accessible at: <https://www.acquisition.gov/far/loadmainre.html>

(5) Executive Orders. The executive orders (EOs) with significant implications to environmental management and compliance in effect (at the time this directive was drafted) are EOs 13423 and 13514. A complete list of all environmental EOs is too expansive to be included herein. A complete listing of EOs can be found through the National Archives accessible at: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/disposition.html>.

b. VA and VHA Directives.

(1) VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management Program, January 2010. This directive establishes VA environmental policies. Its purpose is to set forth a comprehensive Department-wide environmental management policy to comply with Federal mandates and achieve internal goals. It is intended to provide direction to Administrations and staff offices developing and

administering their specific environmental programs. The directive establishes policy in the areas of environmental compliance, green purchasing, chemicals management and pollution prevention, electronics stewardship, waste prevention and recycling, and environmental management systems. It also includes reporting requirements and roles and responsibilities.

(2) VA Directive 0062, Environmental Compliance Management,

(3) VA Handbook 0062, Environmental Compliance Management,

(4) VHA Directive 2006-001, "Accounting for Recycling Revenue at VHA Facilities."

5. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are extracted from the EO 13423 Implementing Instructions.

a. Acquisition. The acquiring of supplies and services as defined in Part 2 of the FAR.

b. Facility. Any building, installation, structure, land, or real property that is owned or operated by, or constructed or manufactured and leased to, an Administration or staff office, as well as any fixture. This term includes a group of facilities at a single or multiple location(s) managed as an integrated operation, as well as government-owned contractor-operated facilities.

c. Pollution prevention. This includes "source reduction" as defined in the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13102), and other practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants through (1) increased efficiency in the use of raw materials, energy, water, or other resources, or (2) the protection of natural resources by conservation.

d. Recycling. The series of activities, including collection, separation, and processing, by which products or other materials are recovered from the solid waste stream for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion.

e. Waste management. The collection, transport, processing, recycling or disposal, and monitoring of waste materials. The term usually relates to materials produced by human activity and to activities undertaken to reduce their effect on human health and the environment. Waste management is also carried out to recover still-useful resources. Waste management can involve solid, liquid, or gaseous or radioactive or mixed substances.

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f. **Waste prevention.** An activity that prevents waste at its source, which includes reducing the amount of material used and/or the toxicity of the material used to accomplish any task; reuse of a product in its original form; and use of repairable, refillable, or durable products that result in a longer useful life.