

## INTERIOR DESIGN OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes the policies, responsibilities and processes for operating and managing an Interior Design Program.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENT:** This directive outlines policies, responsibilities, and processes of the Interior Design Operations and Management Program.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) is responsible for the contents of this directive. Questions may be addressed to Director, Environmental Programs Service (10NA7) at 202-632-7881.
- 4. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Directive 1850, Environmental Programs Service; Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Directive 7531, Acquisition of Artwork, Decorative Furnishings and Decorative Items.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Handbook 1850.05, dated July 1, 2011.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of September 2022. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

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Acting Under Secretary for Health

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## INTERIOR DESIGN OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### 1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes the policies, responsibilities, and processes for operating and managing an Interior Design Program. **AUTHORITY:** Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7301(b).

### 2. BACKGROUND

According to the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ), interior design (ID) is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements, and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals. See References, paragraph 5.n. Where possible, a qualified interior design professional should lead the program.

### 3. POLICY

It is VHA policy that each VA medical facility have an Interior Design (ID) Operations and Management Program which provides a safe and functional environment for Veterans, their families, visitors, and employees. This program must adhere to applicable Joint Commission requirements, VHA Environment of Care standards, federal regulatory requirements, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations, Design Guides, applicable building and fire codes, Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS), VA Barrier Free Design Standards, Patient Centered Care principles, and the requirements in this directive.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.** The Deputy Under Secretary of Health for Operations and Management, or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISN);

(2) Ensuring that each VISN Director has the sufficient resources to fulfill the terms of this directive in all of the VA health facilities within that VISN; and

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to assure compliance with this directive, relevant standards, and applicable regulations.

c. **Director, Office of Environmental Programs Service.** The Director of the Office of Environmental Programs Service (EPS), or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Coordinating of the operational components of VHA's ID Operations and Management Program;

(2) Overseeing of the ID Operations and Management Program;

(3) Reviewing and approving of policy relating to interior design;

(4) Providing guidance and support to all VA medical facilities in the operation of the ID Operations and Management Program;

(5) Ensuring VHA-wide uniform and effective application of the elements identified as critical in the EPS Interior Design Program Guide (See References, paragraph 5.k); and

(6) Advising and communicating to the VA medical facility Interior Designer(s) any policy and procedural changes that affect the built environment or VA operations.

d. **VISN Director.** The VISN Director, or designee, is responsible for ensuring VA medical facility Directors adhere to this directive.

e. **VA Medical Facility Director.** Each VA medical facility Director, or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the ID Operations and Management Program has the necessary training, staffing, resources, space, and equipment to maintain an effective program;

(2) Supporting the ID staff in ensuring that the ID Operations and Management Program provides a healing, therapeutic patient experience through the use of current best practices in design that directly reflects the high level of service a Veteran can expect to receive at their VA health care facility;

(3) Ensuring the VA medical facility provides a safe and functional facility for patients, visitors and staff;

(4) Communicating annually the VA medical facility goals and plans for changes, thus enabling the Interior Designer to guide the ID Operations and Management Program in making informed plans and decisions; and

(5) Ensuring that staff hired possess the necessary qualifications by means of education, examination, and experience to successfully carry out the duties and responsibilities of the ID position.

f. **VA Medical Facility Interior Designer.** The VA Medical Facility Interior Designer is responsible for:

(1) Effectively implementing the elements of the ID Program found in the VHA EPS Interior Design Program Guide, which include, but are not limited to, the following

(a) Identifying and addressing local needs through understanding the VA medical facility goals; developing, applying and maintaining a Master ID Plan; formulating annual budget projections; and communicating with management and staff regarding plans to address the facility's needs and goals.

(b) Representing ID at Facilities Management Service (FMS) Project planning meetings to review incorporation of Patient Centered Care principles and VA Construction and Facilities Management (CFM) Design Guides found on the Technical Information Library ([TIL Web site](#)); analyzing spatial relationships for functionality and ease of comprehension for patients; supervising interior finish development; reviewing interior specifications; and effectively communicating project concepts, goals, and details between the project team and VA staff and management.

(c) Implementing ID project activities to include project activations and procurements, ergonomic assessments in cooperation with safety, selection of interior finishes and furnishings, coordinating furniture moves, deliveries, and installations in conjunction with contractors' and other internal VHA services' schedules, and developing administrative reporting and tracking documents.

(d) Managing the VHA medical facility signage and wayfinding program to address the complete interior and exterior signage needs based on the VA Signage Guide, while reinforcing wayfinding techniques based on Evidence Based Design. See the [VA Signage Design Guide](#).

(e) Performing fiscal responsibilities to manage budgets, procurements and financial reporting while operating within the VA contracting rules and regulations (VA Acquisition Regulation).

(f) Coordinating and collaborating with other VA technical professionals, staff and outside contractors to provide a high quality, therapeutic environment of care exemplifying excellence in customer service.

(2) Conducting business in accordance with this directive as well as VA Directive 7531, Acquisition of Artwork, Decorative Furnishings and Decorative Items and industry standard procedures.

(3) Maintaining current knowledge of VA nationwide initiatives, mandates, advisories and policies to determine how they apply to the design of the built environment.

(4) Maintaining current knowledge of building and fire code changes and their application.

(5) Increasing professional knowledge base through interaction with other professionals, open communication with upper levels of management and active involvement in training and research.

## 5. REFERENCES

- a. 38 CFR 1.9, Description, Use and Display of VA Seal and Flag
- b. 38 CFR 17.82, Substance Abuse Outpatient Facilities.
- c. 48 CFR Chapter 1, Federal Acquisition Regulation System (FAR)
- d. 48 CFR Chapter 8, Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation System (VAAR)
- e. VA Directive 7531, Acquisition of Artwork, Decorative Furnishings, and Decorative Items, dated March 1, 2017, or subsequent policy.
- f. VHA Directive 1850, Environmental Programs Service, dated November 4, 2011, or subsequent policy.
- g. [VA Barrier Free Design Standard](#): A Supplement to the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards. (Office of Construction & Facilities Management, Facilities Standards Service)
- h. VA Construction and Facilities Management (CFM), Technical Information Library, ([TIL](#)).
- i. [VA Signage Design Guide](#).
- j. VHA Environmental Program Services: [EPS Interior Design Program Guide](#).  
**NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site that is not available to the public.*
- k. VHA Environmental Program Services: [EPS Interior Design Website](#). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site that is not available to the public.*
- l. [VHA Environment of Care Standards and Resources \(VHA Center for Engineering & Occupational Safety and Health\)](#). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site that is not available to the public.*
- m. [International Building Code 2015](#). **NOTE:** *This Web site is outside of VA or other federal internet system and may not be fully compliant with the Rehabilitation Act.*
- n. [National Council for Interior Design Qualification](#). **NOTE:** *This Web site is outside of VA or other federal internet system and may not be fully compliant with the Rehabilitation Act.*
- o. [National Fire Prevention Association Life Safety Code \(NFPA 101\)](#). **NOTE:** *This Web site is outside of VA or other federal internet system and may not be fully compliant with the Rehabilitation Act.*

p. The Joint Commission standards. Relevant standards are found at the [VHA Center for Engineering & Occupational Safety and Health Web site](#)

q. [United States Access Board. Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines.](#)

r. United States Access Board. [Architectural Barriers Act \(ABA\) Standards.](#) **NOTE:** *This Web site is outside of VA or other federal internet system and may not be fully compliant with the Rehabilitation Act.*