

VA Environmental Management Program

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE.** To update the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Environmental Management Program policy.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES.** This directive consolidates and expands the content of previous environmental directives into one directive.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Management.
4. **RELATED HANDBOOKS**
 - a. VA Handbook 0057.1, Green Purchasing
 - b. VA Handbook 0057.2, Chemicals Management and Pollution Prevention
 - c. VA Handbook 0057.3, Electronics Stewardship
 - d. VA Handbook 0057.4, Environmental Compliance
 - e. VA Handbook 0057.5, Waste Prevention and Recycling
 - f. VA Handbook 0057.6, Environmental Management Systems
5. **RESCISSIONS.** This directive rescinds the following directives:
 - a. VA Directive 0052, Affirmative Procurement, Recycling, and Waste/Pollution Prevention Programs, dated June 14, 2002
 - b. VA Directive 0053, VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program, dated September 18, 2006
 - c. VA Directive 0057, VA Environmental Management System and Governing Environmental Policy, dated September 14, 2004

CERTIFIED BY:

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

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

/s/
Rita A. Reed
Acting Assistant Secretary for Management

Distribution: Electronic Only

VA ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

a. This directive establishes Department of Veterans Affairs (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.¹ It is intended to provide direction to the Administrations and staff offices in the development and administration of each organization's specific environmental programs.

b. This directive applies to all Administrations and staff offices within VA including those located in leased space.

2. POLICY

a. **General.** In conducting its mission to serve our Nation's Veterans, it is VA policy to conduct business in a sustainable manner that protects human health and the environment, is economically and fiscally sound, and ensures continuous improvement. Environmental considerations and accountability are fundamental and integral components of policies, planning, operations, and management processes across all VA missions, activities, and functions.

b. **Green Purchasing.** VA will ensure the preferred acquisition of environmentally preferable goods and services;

c. **Chemicals Management and Pollution Prevention.** It is VA policy to reduce or eliminate the quantity of toxic and hazardous chemicals and materials acquired, generated, used, and/or disposed, to the extent possible;

d. **Electronics Stewardship.** In managing the Department's electronic assets, VA will buy Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)-registered electronic products, enable the Energy Star features on agency computers and monitors, establish and implement policies to extend the useful life of its electronic equipment, and use environmentally sound practices with respect to the disposition of electronic equipment that has reached the end of its useful life;

e. **Environmental Compliance.** VA will ensure that it meets or exceeds the requirements of all applicable executive orders and Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations;

f. **Waste Prevention and Recycling.** It is VA policy to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials and waste, and to maintain life-cycle cost-effective waste prevention and recycling programs;

¹ Energy and water, fleet and green buildings policies are covered separately in topic-specific directives.

g. **Environmental Management Systems (EMS).** VA shall implement environmental management systems (EMS) at all appropriate facilities and at all appropriate organizational levels to ensure the use of EMS as the primary management approach for addressing environmental compliance and the environmental aspects of VA's operations and activities, including the environmental aspects of energy and transportation functions. All VA facilities should be covered by an EMS (either a facility EMS, a multi-site EMS or an organizational EMS), unless the organization requests and receives authorization from the Senior Agency Official (SAO) to exclude specific facilities.

h. **Reporting Requirements.** The Administrations and appropriate staff offices shall respond to VA data calls to provide information needed for Department-level consolidated reports relative to the content of this directive.

i. **Management Tools.** VA will employ a variety of management tools to implement the policies set forth in this directive. These include, but are not limited to:

- (1) VA Environmental Handbooks
- (2) Department-level Environmental Management Task Force
- (3) Department-level Environmental Management Action Plan
- (4) Training and recognition

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Assistant Secretary for Management.** The Assistant Secretary for Management, as the SAO, establishes the overall policy and guidelines to implement environmental programs within the Department, as well as oversees the VA Environmental Management Program, and is specifically responsible for:

- (1) monitoring VA's activities to implement environmental programs and report progress to the Secretary of VA, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Federal Environmental Executive, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other applicable entities;
- (2) establishing a cross-functional, Department-wide VA Environmental Management Task Force, with appropriate representatives necessary to expeditiously meet the goals and requirements of the environmental programs, including collaboration with other agencies; and
- (3) requesting sufficient funds to ensure VA Department-wide implementation of environmental policies including but not limited to salary dollars for Administration and staff office environmental staff

b. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Directors of Staff Offices.

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Directors of staff offices establish the overall policy and guidelines to implement environmental programs within their management areas consistent with this policy and are responsible for:

- (1) ensuring that environmental programs are in place to manage Administrations and staff office environmental responsibilities and address the policies and goals of this Directive and routinely evaluating them to identify and correct program issues;
- (2) ensuring that measures for successful implementation of environmental programs are included in performance standards and performance evaluations of senior Administrations and staff office officials, and other personnel, as appropriate;
- (3) requesting sufficient funds in Administrations and staff offices budgets to ensure compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and Executive Orders (E.O.);
- (4) implementing and maintaining an EMS at all appropriate facilities and all appropriate organizational levels;
- (5) ensuring appropriate and sufficient staffing and resources to support the work of the Environmental Management Task Force and implement the policies and goals of this directive, including but not limited to:
 - (a) a full-time environmental manager at each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) and at each VHA medical center/health care system;
 - (b) a full-time environmental manager at each Veterans Benefits Administrations Area Office;
 - (c) a full-time environmental manager for each National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Memorial Service Network (MSN) or equivalent support provided through a contract/cross servicing agreement; and
 - (d) a full-time green purchasing program manager in the acquisition group within the Office of Acquisition and Logistics.
- (6) ensuring their acquisition, construction, and logistics staff incorporate environmental policies into their contracts, specifications, and training.
- (7) appointing one or more technical representatives to the Environmental Task Force.”

c. **The Director of the Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM)** is responsible for:

(1) working with counterparts in other VA organizations to ensure environmental issues are addressed in all programs;

(2) assisting in resolving conflicts among organizations regarding environmental issues.

d. **The Director of the Office of Investment and Enterprise Development Service**, within the Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM), is responsible for:

(1) providing program support to the Assistant Secretary for Management in implementing the environmental management provisions of this Directive and other applicable environmental laws, regulations, and Executive Orders;

(2) conducting oversight activities to ensure that an effective Environmental Management Program is implemented throughout the Department;

(3) coordinating the annual submission of required environmental management and sustainability reports to CEQ, Office of Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE), OMB, EPA, and other applicable entities;

(4) coordinating the semi-annual submission of the Environmental Stewardship Scorecard report to OFEE and OMB;

(5) serving as the technical and management member of the VA Environmental Management Task Force and its sub-groups; and

(6) representing VA on committees, task forces, and working groups established to support the Federal Environmental Executive.

e. **The Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO)** is responsible for:

(1) developing and evaluating the performance of the VA Green Procurement Program (GPP), to include all components of the Federal Green Purchasing Program, with input and collaboration from the OAEM Director and senior procurement representatives from all Administrations and staff offices;

(2) ensuring compliance with all environmentally related policies and procedures contained in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR);

(3) keeping the Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) updated with the latest environmental FAR amendments;

(4) developing procedures for identifying and correcting program compliance weaknesses through management reviews, internal control reviews, and other appropriate means;

(5) identifying training needs and developing or providing access to training programs to ensure that Administrations procurement and acquisition program managers are aware of the goals of this Directive;

(6) providing a technical representative to serve on the VA Environmental Management Task Force and on the various committees and working groups, as appropriate, to support implementation of this Directive;

(7) providing assistance to OAEM in developing VA-level responses to acquisition-related questions in mandated reports such as "E.O. 13423 Sustainable Practices: Green Purchasing, Waste Management, and Chemicals Management," or similar reports; and

(8) ensuring that contracting officers include required environmental FAR clauses and appropriate environmental specifications in their contracts.

(9) providing computerized tracking methods or enhance purchasing software to allow for coding hazardous materials, biobased and "green" purchases

f. **The Director of the Office of Finance** is responsible for identifying training needs and developing or providing access to training programs to ensure purchase card coordinators, purchase card holders, and approving officials are aware of the goals of this Directive and comply with the Federal Green Purchasing Program.

g. **The Chief Information Officer (CIO)** is responsible for:

(1) developing and implementing the policies necessary to achieve the electronic stewardship goals of E.O. 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management" and related Federal mandates;

(2) providing one or more technical representatives to serve on the VA Environmental Management Task Force and on the Federal Electronics Stewardship Working Group (FESWG) established to support Federal electronic stewardship goals;

(3) ensuring that information technology managers, cyber security managers, and other relevant personnel are aware of and implement the goals of this directive, as well as of applicable environmental and energy laws, regulations, and Executive Orders;

(4) providing a consolidated progress report to the OAEM Director on the electronics stewardship metric of the Environmental Stewardship Scorecard twice annually, developing planned actions for the six-month period immediately following

each assessment, and ensuring that the planned actions are completed in a timely manner; and

(5) ensuring VA information technology (IT) policy complies with applicable Federal, state and Executive Order requirements.

4. **DEFINITIONS.** The following definitions are extracted from the E.O. 13423 Implementing Instructions.

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

b. **Appropriate facility or organization.** Any Federal facility or organization that is subject to compliance with environmental regulation or conducts activities that can have a significant impact on the environment, either directly or indirectly, individually or cumulatively, due to the operations of that facility's or organization's mission, processes, or functions.

c. **Environmental Management System.** A set of processes and practices that enable an organization to increase its operating efficiency, continually improve overall environmental performance and better manage and reduce its environmental impacts, including those environmental aspects related to energy and transportation functions. EMS implementation reflects accepted quality management principles based on the "Plan, Do, Check, Act," model found in the ISO 14001:2004(E) International Standard and using a standard process to identify and prioritize current activities, establish goals, implement plans to meet the goals, evaluate progress, and make improvements to ensure continual improvement.

d. **Environmentally preferable.** Products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, product, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.

e. **Life-cycle cost.** The sum of the present values of capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, and disposal costs over the lifetime of the project, product, or measure.

f. **Life-cycle cost-effective.** The life-cycle costs of a product, project, or measure are estimated to be equal to or less than the base case (i.e., current or standard practice or product).

g. **Pollution prevention.** "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.

h. **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.

i. **Sustainable.** Of or pertaining to creating and maintaining conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.

5. REFERENCES.

- a. Executive Order 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management," dated January 24, 2007.
- b. Instructions for Implementing Executive Order 13423, dated March 29, 2007.
- c. Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended, (CAA) (42 U.S.C. § 7401 et seq.).
- d. Clean Water Act of 1977 (CWA) (33U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.).
- e. Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA or Superfund) (42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.).
- f. Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA) (42 U.S.C. 11011 et seq.).
- g. Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA), Section 9002 (7 U.S.C. 8102).
- h. Federal Acquisition Regulations Title 48 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- i. Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA), Section 9002 (Public Law 110-246).
- j. ISO 14001:2004(E) International Standard.
- k. Memorandum of Understanding – Promoting Sustainable environmental Stewardship of Federal Electronic Assets (2004).
- l. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.)

- m. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11.
- n. Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 (PPA) (42 U.S.C. §§13101-13109).
- o. Protection of the Environment, Code of Federal Regulations Title 40 1-1500.
- p. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) (42 U.S.C § 321 et seq.).
- q. Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (SDWA) (42 U.S.C. § 300f et seq.).
- r. Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.).
- s. Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq.).
- t. VA NEPA implementing regulation (38 CFR Part 26)