

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
SERVICE DIRECTIVES**

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OVERVIEW

4.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter explains how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) authorizes and publishes handbooks.

4.2 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter applies to handbooks authorized in Service Manual chapters (see [011 FW 2](#) and [3](#)).

4.3 What is the overall policy? The Service uses handbooks as a component of the directives system to explain to employees how to comply with Service Manual chapters by using good and acceptable practices and procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

4.4 Who is responsible for handbooks? See Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Responsibilities for Handbooks

These employees...	Are responsible for...
A. The Director	Authorizing handbooks when approving the corresponding Service Manual chapters.
B. The Chief, Policy and Regulations Branch (PRB) in the Division of Policy, Economics, Risk Management, and Analytics	(1) Reviewing handbooks to ensure they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Are written in plain language, and (b) Do not conflict with other Service policy; and (2) Publishing handbooks on the internet with the corresponding Service Manual chapter.
C. The Directorate member responsible for the content of a handbook	Approving minor revisions to authorized handbooks or determining if the Director should approve the revisions to a handbook.

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These employees...	Are responsible for...
D. The Chief of the division or office responsible for the content of the handbook	(1) Writing and updating a handbook as necessary, (2) Ensuring that any handbook developed receives appropriate review and corresponds with a Service Manual chapter, and (3) Coordinating with the PRB to ensure the most recent version of the handbook is available online.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HANDBOOKS

4.5 Are there any rules governing the development of handbooks? Because divisions and offices use handbooks to provide detailed best practices and procedures, it is important that they are easily updated and current. The division or office responsible for writing a handbook makes the format and content decisions based on their audience and purpose. However, there are a few rules that handbook developers must follow:

A. Review recent handbooks on PRB’s [Handbooks website](#) to get ideas about effective formats and the organization of content that might work for your handbook.

B. Use plain language (see [116 FW 1](#) and the [Government’s plain language website](#)).

C. Make sure that:

- (1) The information in the handbook does not contradict existing policy, and
- (2) Any citations and references in the handbook are accurate.

D. Put a cross-reference to the handbook in the authorizing Service Manual chapter.

4.6 What are the requirements for the formal review of handbooks?

A. When a handbook is necessary, most often you develop it simultaneously with the chapter that will authorize it. You send them both through the review and surname process at the same time. This includes a Directorate review phase where the authoring program requests comments from the Directorate on the chapter and handbook. (See [011 FW 3](#) for more information.) After other reviewing officials surname the final package, the Director reviews and authorizes the chapter and the initial release of the handbook.

B. If you do not finish developing a handbook until after we publish the corresponding Service Manual chapter, you may amend the chapter to authorize the handbook. Contact PRB for more information.

4.7 What are the requirements for updating a handbook?

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Service Directives

Part 011 The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual

Chapter 4 Handbooks

011 FW 4

A. After its initial authorization, you may make minor revisions to a handbook with the approval of your supervising Directorate member.

B. You should:

(1) Seek review from PRB, the appropriate program officials, and your managing Directorate member before asking PRB to publish a revised draft. If the revisions are significant, the Directorate member may determine that the Director should approve the revisions to the handbook.

(2) Coordinate with PRB, who will post the revised version of the handbook online.

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Director

Signed by: AURELIA SKIPWITH