

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
INFORMATION AND EXPRESSION**

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OVERVIEW

1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter:

A. Establishes requirements that must be met before U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees may use official Government time and equipment to complete surveys, and

B. Describes the process for getting approval to send a survey to employees to complete.

1.2 What are the scope and objectives of this chapter?

A. Scope: This chapter applies to all employees.

B. Objectives: Our objectives are to ensure that:

(1) Employees only use their official duty time and Government equipment to complete surveys when the appropriate individuals have approved them,

(2) The surveys they complete are of high quality, and

(3) We continue to encourage employees to share information with others when it is appropriate to do so.

1.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Standards for Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, Use of Government Property and Use of Official Time ([5 CFR 2635.704 and 705](#)).

B. [470 Departmental Manual \(DM\) 1](#), Public Communications – General Policy and Procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1.4 Who is responsible for managing incoming surveys and use of employee time to complete them? The Assistant Director – Management and Administration (AD – MA) oversees the management of incoming surveys through the Chief, Policy and Regulations Branch (PRB), Division of Policy, Economics, Risk Management, and Analytics. Depending on the type of survey, the Assistant Director – MA, other Directorate members in Headquarters and the Regions, and Project Leaders have responsibility for approving employees' use of duty time to complete surveys. See section 1.5, Table 1-1 for who must approve surveys. Supervisors should help employees determine whether or not a survey has been approved (if it needs to be) before they complete it.

APPROVAL OF SURVEYS

1.5 What types of surveys need approval before employees can use official duty time to complete them? Table 1-1 describes the types of incoming surveys and who needs to approve them.

Table 1-1: Types of Surveys and Approvals

Type of survey	Description	Level of approval
A. Governmentwide Surveys	These surveys generally come from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and other governing agencies.	None. Employees may take these surveys.
B. Surveys from the Department of the Interior (Department)	These surveys may be mandatory or optional.	None, but employees should coordinate taking this type of survey with their supervisor so the supervisor is aware of it.
C. Customer service surveys Service programs/divisions develop to get feedback on personnel performance	Programs who provide services to our employees may develop customer service surveys and request employees complete them when they receive a service (e.g., from a Joint Administrative Operations (JAO) employee or an Information Resources and Technology Management contractor).	None. Employees may take these surveys to provide feedback if time allows.
D. Surveys from another Bureau in the Department	These surveys may come from the U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, etc.	The Assistant Director – MA, and the program AD if the subject of the survey is of interest to or impacts their program, must approve the surveys before employees may use duty time to complete them (see section 1.7A for the coordination process).

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Type of survey	Description	Level of approval
E. Surveys from another Government agency	These surveys may come from such agencies as the Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, etc.	The Assistant Director – MA, and the program AD if the subject of the survey is of interest to or impacts their program, must approve them after they've been reviewed (see section 1.7A), and before employees may use duty time to complete them.
F. Surveys from outside of the Service (e.g., from an individual, a nonprofit organization, an association, etc.)	Such surveys may come from graduate students doing research for a thesis, associations who work with the Service (e.g., the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), a consulting company doing research, etc.	<p><i>Servicewide/cross-program/cross-Regional:</i> The Assistant Director – MA, and the program AD if the subject of the survey is of interest to or impacts their program, must approve them after they've been reviewed (see section 1.7A), and before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p> <p><i>Within one Region/within one duty station:</i> The Regional Director or Project Leader must approve them after they've been reviewed (see section 1.7B), and before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p>
G. Surveys from within the Service (other than customer service surveys)	Such surveys may be Servicewide, Servicewide for one program, Regionwide in one Region, or within a program in a Region.	<p><i>Servicewide surveys across multiple programs:</i> The Assistant Director – MA, and the program AD if the subject of the survey is of interest to or impacts their program, must approve them after they've been reviewed (see section 1.7A), and before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p> <p><i>Servicewide surveys within one program:</i> The program's Assistant Director must approve them after they've been reviewed (see section 1.7B), and before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p> <p><i>Regionwide in one Region:</i> The Regional Director must approve them (see section 1.7B) before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p>

Type of survey	Description	Level of approval
		<p><i>Within one program in one Region:</i> The program's Assistant Regional Director must approve them (see section 1.7B) before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p> <p><i>Within one duty station:</i> The Project Leader must approve them (see section 1.7B) before employees may use duty time to complete them.</p>

1.6 How can an employee tell if the appropriate official has approved using official duty time to take the survey? Employees can tell if the Assistant Director – MA (for outside surveys and Servicewide surveys across multiple Regions or programs), an Assistant Director (for Servicewide surveys within one program and outside surveys or Servicewide surveys that are of interest to or impact their program), a Regional Director (for Regional surveys), an Assistant Regional Director (for surveys within one program in a Region), or a Project Leader (for duty station surveys) approved a survey because they will have either received a prior email about the survey or there will be an accompanying memorandum or email from the approving official. Without documentation showing approval, employees must not use duty time or Government equipment to take the survey unless they fall under one of the categories not requiring approval (see [sections 1.5A, B, and C](#)).

1.7 What is the process for getting approval for a survey?

A. Surveys requiring Assistant Director – MA approval:

(1) When the Service receives a request for employees to complete a survey that requires approval from the Assistant Director – MA, the employee contacted should notify the Chief, PRB.

(2) The Chief, PRB must coordinate with the appropriate program(s) and experts to ensure the survey is of adequate quality to warrant employees using duty time to complete it. The Chief may also coordinate with the author/initiator of the survey. Following are examples of the types of officials/programs from whom the Chief, PRB may seek input or concurrence, or both:

- (a)** The Ethics office in the Department,
- (b)** The Service Associate Privacy Act Officer,
- (c)** A Service survey expert,
- (d)** The Assistant Director(s) of the program(s) affected (e.g., the Chief – National Wildlife Refuge System for a survey about refuges), and
- (e)** The Service's Science Integrity Officer for surveys related to scientific information or integrity.

(3) After receiving concurrence from the appropriate officials, the Chief, PRB:

- (a)** Writes a decision memorandum that recommends whether or not to approve the survey (see Exhibit 1 for example memorandum). The memorandum should briefly (generally one page or less) describe:

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Part 119 Surveys

Chapter 1 Approving and Completing Surveys

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- (i) Whether the Chief, PRB is recommending approval or disapproval,
- (ii) What the survey is about and where it originated,
- (iii) How the survey will be implemented and approximately how many employees will take it,
- (iv) Approximately how long it will take to complete the survey, and
- (v) Any potential benefit to the Service.

(b) If the subject of a survey is of interest to or impacts a specific program, decision memorandums requiring approval by the Assistant Director - MA should first be routed through the program's Assistant Director for review and approval.

B. Programwide (within one program), Regional, or Duty Station Surveys: Programs, Regional offices, and duty stations should develop and follow local approval procedures for employees to use duty time and Government equipment to respond to surveys from within the Service (see [section 1.5G](#)).

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Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director
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