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OVERVIEW

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

A. Establishes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) forms management program and the position of the Service Forms Manager; and

B. Provides guidance and responsibilities related to the creation, management, and distribution of official Service forms, regardless of medium.

2.2 What is the scope of this chapter?

A. This chapter applies to all Service employees who create, manage, collect, or otherwise use forms.

B. Regions should establish forms management guidance for Regional forms. Their guidance should align as closely as possible with the Service forms policy in section 2.4, and they must meet any applicable mandatory compliance requirements we describe in section 2.8.

C. This chapter does not apply to forms that are:

(1) Used informally so that they:

(a) Would not be considered official records (e.g., internal office survey to determine the best date to schedule training),

(b) Do not require the developer or user to maintain a history of information, and

(c) Are transitory or short-term in nature.

(2) Major system application forms (e.g., forms that the Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) generates). Only authorized system users use these forms and only within the context of the particular system. The system owner must establish requirements for these forms that, at a minimum, meet the applicable mandatory compliance requirements in section 2.8. He/she is also responsible for managing the forms, including preserving the forms in accordance with all applicable records management requirements.

2.3 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Common Form (CF). A type of form for an information collection that can be used by two or more agencies, or Governmentwide, for the same purpose. A "host" agency obtains Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval of an information collection so that one or more "using" agencies can use the CF. After OMB grants approval, any prospective agency that seeks to collect identical information for the same purpose can obtain approval to use the CF by providing its agency-specific information to OMB (e.g., burden estimates and number of respondents).

B. Department of the Interior (DI) Form. Forms the Department's Forms Manager approves for mandatory Departmentwide use. He/she assigns a DI number according to the Department's numbering convention (e.g., DI-105).

C. Edition Date. The date on a form that indicates the month and year it was last revised. We update the edition date for forms whenever we make any changes, including changes to the structure of the document to improve accessibility.

D. Electronic Form. Paperless forms authors create using software so that they can be electronically accessed, searched, completed, transmitted, retrieved, and printed. We create most Service forms as fillable PDFs.

E. Form. Any arrangement of data fields with space for filling in data in a pre-determined format designed to systematically and repetitively collect, store, extract, or transmit the prescribed data, regardless of medium.

F. Information Collection. A concept established through the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) that means obtaining, causing to be obtained, soliciting, or requiring the disclosure to an agency, third parties, or the public of information by or for a Government agency. Information collections use identical questions posed to, or identical reporting, recordkeeping, or disclosure requirements imposed on, ten or more persons, whether mandatory, voluntary, or required to obtain or retain a benefit. The PRA's use of the term "persons" does not include employees of the requesting agency, current Government employees acting within the scope of their employment (unless the information is being collected for general statistical purposes), or Federal contractors engaged in complying with the collection of information. See 5 CFR 1320, Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public and 281 FW 4, for details about information collections.

G. Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR). The office, program, or Region that authored a Service form and has responsibility for its maintenance, distribution, and revision.

H. Optional Form (OF). A form that two or more Federal agencies use and that the General Services Administration (GSA) has approved for non-mandatory Governmentwide use.

I. Other Agency Form. All forms prescribed by a Federal agency (such as the Department of Labor or U.S. Postal Service) that are not Standard Forms (SF) or OFs, or Departmental, Service, or Regional forms. The Service Forms Manager may approve Service use of other agency forms for specific functions.

J. Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity either alone, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc., or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.

K. Public Use Form. A form we use to collect information from ten or more members of the public (such as individuals; businesses; organizations; foreign citizens; and state, local, and tribal governments). OMB must approve public use forms as required by the PRA.

L. Regional Form. A form designed for internal use within a single Region or program in a Region. Management of these forms is the responsibility of the prescribing Region or program.

M. Service Form. A form originated in the Service and prescribed for Servicewide use. This includes internal forms required for use across all Regions and programs, program-specific forms, and public use forms.

N. Standard Form (SF). A fixed or sequential order of data elements on a form that the GSA has approved for Federal mandatory use. GSA assigns SF numbers.

2.4 What is the overall policy?

A. It is Service policy to create new official Service forms when:

(1) Repetitive official transactions or activities are required to support our mission,

(2) A form would improve the understanding and use of data,

(3) Use of a form improves the speed and flow of information,

(4) It would not duplicate another existing official form (see section 2.9A),

(5) The need for a form extends beyond a single Region or program, and

(6) A form is the most effective method of collecting information from internal audiences or members of the public.

B. We must design and write all Service forms:

(1) To minimize the burden on the user and allow for easy data entry and retrieval;

(2) In electronic format, leveraging electronic signatures and automated workflows to the greatest extent possible, unless policy or mission-related requirements make it necessary to use hard copy;

(3) To capture only the information necessary to carry out the official purpose for which they are intended; and

(4) In plain language, which means including clear and adequate instructions (see 116 FW 1, Plain Language in Fish and Wildlife Service Documents).

C. Service forms must be:

(1) Authorized by and referenced in an appropriate policy (e.g., a Fish and Wildlife Service Manual chapter), regulation, or other official document;

(2) Reviewed and approved by the Forms Manager according to the processes in section 2.9B before we make them available for use;

(3) Stored in one of two forms libraries, once approved. Public use forms are on the Service's Forms internet site. Internal forms are stored on the FWS Internal Forms Library, which is on the intranet; and

(4) Preserved according to the applicable records schedule, once completed by members of the public or Service employees. Employees can find the Service's latest approved records schedules on the Records Management SharePoint site.

2.5 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public (5 CFR Part 1320).

B. E-Government Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-347).

C. Federal Management Regulation (FMR) Part 102-193, "Creation, Maintenance and Use of Records" (41 CFR Part 102-193).

D. FMR Part 194, "Standard and Optional Forms Management Program" (41 CFR Part 102-194).

E. Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 31, as amended).

F. Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) (Public Law 105-277).

G. Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (Clinger-Cohen Act) (Division E- Public Law 104-106).

H. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13).

I. The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a, as amended).

J. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d).

K. 387 Departmental Manual (DM) 1, Policy and Guidance for Creating, Using, and Maintaining Forms.

RESPONSIBILITIES

2.6 What does the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) have to do to develop and manage a form?

A. The program office that originates a Service form—the OPR—is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that newly created forms do not conflict with or duplicate existing forms;

(2) Authorizing the use of a form in an appropriate Service policy, regulation, or other document;

(3) Developing forms in accordance with this chapter, the instructions provided on the FWS Internal Forms Library, and other applicable guidance;

(4) Coordinating with Service staff in areas such as privacy, Section 508, and information collection to ensure that forms meet the requirements in each area (see section 2.8);

(5) Reviewing forms, at least biennially, to determine:

(a) That there's a continuing need for the form,

(b) For public use forms, whether we can modify the form to reduce the information collection burden on the public,

(c) Whether automation or additional automation is appropriate, and

(d) Any other improvements or modifications that would benefit users;

(6) Revising the content, layout, or format of a form when necessary and receiving approval for those revisions through the Service Forms Manager;

(7) Coordinating with the Forms Manager to identify and retire forms that are obsolete; and

(8) Notifying stakeholders and interested parties when the office revises or retires a form, with the assistance of the Forms Manager.

B. Each Headquarters program is responsible for naming a Program Forms Coordinator to serve as the point-of-contact and carry out the responsibilities above for all forms for which the program is the OPR, coordinating with other employees within their program as necessary.

C. For each public use form that originates within a Region, that Region is responsible for naming an employee to serve as the point-of-contact and carry out the responsibilities above for that form, coordinating with other Regional employees as necessary. Regions must provide the name of the point-of-contact and contact information to the Service Forms Manager.

2.7 What other employees are responsible for forms management? See Table 2-1.

Table 2-1; Responsibilities for Forms Management

These employees…	Are responsible for…
A. The Director	Approving or declining to approve Servicewide policy related to forms and the forms management program.
B. Associate Chief Information Officer (ACIO) for the Service, i.e., the Assistant Director – Information Resources and Technology Management	**(1)** Ensuring that there is a policy for forms management, **(2)** Designating an employee to serve as the Service Forms Manager, **(3)** Providing direction and oversight for the Service's forms management program, and **(4)** Providing for needed improvements and changes in the forms management program.
C. Directorate members	**(1)** Ensuring compliance with this chapter within their areas of responsibility; **(2)** In Headquarters, naming a Program Forms Coordinator for Service forms for which their program is the OPR; and **(3)** For Regional Directors: **(a)** Approving Regional forms management policies for the creation, design, approval, management, and disposition of Regional forms; **(b)** Ensuring Regional forms meet all the applicable mandatory compliance requirements in this chapter; and

These employees…	Are responsible for…
	(c) Ensuring a point-of-contact is named for public use forms for which their Region is the OPR.
D. Service Forms Manager	**(1)** Ensuring our forms comply with Departmental and Federal forms management policies, standards, and guidelines; **(2)** Approving and managing Service forms in accordance with this chapter and Departmental forms policy; **(3)** Maintaining current versions of forms on the Service Forms internet site and the FWS Internal Forms Library, as appropriate; **(4)** Coordinating with the Department and the Service's Section 508 Coordinator, Associate Privacy Officer, Information Collection Clearance Officer (ICCO), Program Forms Coordinators, and other officials as necessary regarding the creation, storage, use, approval, and disposition of forms; **(5)** Assisting with the design of forms to reduce the amount of PII and other private information collected on Service forms to the extent possible; **(6)** Assigning form numbers and edition dates for Service forms in a manner consistent with the approved Departmental *Forms Style Guide*; **(7)** Ensuring the format and content of Service forms are consistent with the latest version of the approved *Forms Style Guide;* **(8)** Reviewing all Service forms and the forms management program at least every 5 years; **(9)** Working with Program Forms Coordinators to revise, rescind, or consolidate forms; **(10)** Ensuring Program Forms Coordinators are aware of their forms management responsibilities; **(11)** Coordinating with the Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs (PPM) to ensure that Service Manual chapters, regulations, or other official documents have the appropriate links to Service forms; and **(12)** Facilitating communications with form users, both public and internal, and Program Forms Coordinators.

These employees…	Are responsible for…
E. Program Forms Coordinators	**(1)** Coordinating with employees in their programs to determine the need for a new form; **(2)** Developing forms in accordance with this chapter and other applicable guidance; **(3)** Coordinating with Service staff in areas such as privacy, Section 508, and information collection to ensure that forms meet the requirements in each area; **(4)** Reviewing forms within their programs, at least biennially; **(5)** Revising the content, layout, or format of a form when necessary and receiving approval for those revisions through the Service Forms Manager; **(6)** Coordinating with employees of other divisions within their programs to develop and revise forms used by those divisions; **(7)** Communicating changes to the forms to stakeholders and interested parties when forms are revised or retired, with the assistance of the Service Forms Manager; and **(8)** Coordinating with the Service Forms Manager to identify and retire forms that are obsolete.
F. Information Collection Clearance Officer (ICCO) (within PPM)	**(1)** Reviewing applicable forms: **(a)** For compliance with the PRA and related Departmental and OMB requirements, and **(b)** To ensure that the information collected is necessary and non-duplicative; **(2)** Coordinating approval of forms that constitute information collections with OMB; and **(3)** Ensuring that applicable forms include a PRA and estimated burden statement.
G. National Section 508 Coordinator	**(1)** Ensuring that all forms made available to the public and to Service employees comply with the Section 508 accessibility standards, and **(2)** Assisting with the creation of Section 508-compliant forms through the distribution of accessible form templates and design guidance.

These employees…	Are responsible for…
H. Associate Privacy Officer (APO), i.e., Service Privacy Act Officer	**(1)** Assisting form developers, Program Forms Coordinators, and the Service Forms Manager with meeting applicable privacy requirements for forms; and **(2)** Coordinating with the Service Forms Manager to ensure all Privacy Act Statements included on forms are accurate.
I. Service Publications Management Officer (i.e., the Chief, Branch of Printing and Publishing in External Affairs) and Regional Publication Coordinators	**(1)** Reviewing forms that require printing and related services; **(2)** Coordinating the procurement of printing and related services; and **(3)** Identifying and controlling paper versions of Service law enforcement-related forms for reference, printing, stocking, and distribution.
J. Employees	**(1)** Coordinating with Program Forms Coordinators when developing Service forms, **(2)** Using forms in a manner consistent with the requirements in this chapter, and **(3)** Providing feedback to Program Forms Coordinators regarding the usefulness of forms and suggesting improvements.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FORMS

2.8 With what laws must Service forms comply? Service forms must comply with applicable privacy, accessibility, and information collection requirements as discussed below. Additional requirements related to records management and the authorization for the form may apply. The Service Forms Manager must ensure that all Service forms meet applicable compliance requirements before approving them.

A. Privacy - Service forms must comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act and related privacy policies if the form collects any personal information from individuals for Privacy Act systems. The Associate Privacy Officer is available to help Program Forms Coordinators to determine whether forms collect any PII or other personal information and to assist with any other privacy-related issues.

(1) We demonstrate compliance with privacy requirements by including a Privacy Act Statement on the form. At a minimum, the Privacy Act Statement must include the following information:

(a) Legal authority that permits the collection of the information,

(b) Principal purpose for which we collect and use the information,

(c) Intended disclosures (i.e., how we will use the information and who we will share it with),

(d) Reference to the System of Records Notice covering the information, if applicable,

(e) Whether providing the information is mandatory or voluntary, and

(f) Consequences of not providing the information.

(2) Program Forms Coordinators are responsible for determining whether their forms require a Privacy Act Statement or Notice and should work with the Associate Privacy Officer and the ICCO to ensure that the statements contain the necessary information and are in the correct format.

B. Section 508 - All forms must comply with the Section 508 accessibility standards. Regional and Program Section 508 Coordinators and the Service Section 508 Coordinator are available to assist form developers to design compliant forms. You can find more information about complying with the Section 508 standards in 270 FW 4, Implementing Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act - Public use forms must comply with the requirements of the PRA and related regulations, as they constitute an information collection.

(1) To meet these requirements, we must ensure that these forms include a:

(a) Valid OMB Control Number, which indicates OMB approval for the collection;

(b) Expiration date for the OMB approval; and

(c) PRA and estimated burden statements.

(2) If you plan to use a CF, you must coordinate with the ICCO.

(3) You can find more information about PRA requirements in 281 FW 4 and 281 FW 5. The Service's ICCO in PPM assists form developers with creating the PRA statement, estimating public burden, receiving approval from OMB, and more.

CREATION, REVIEW, AND APPROVAL PROCESS

2.9 How does a Service employee determine if a new form is necessary and obtain appropriate review and approval?

A. First, research what forms exist. We only create new Service forms if an existing official form does not suit our purposes. Before creating a new Service form, authoring OPRs must review existing Governmentwide, Departmental, and Service forms and:

(1) Use SF, OF, CF, and Departmental (i.e., DI) forms that achieve the same goal, unless there is an approved exception in place and a legitimate business reason to use a Service-specific version of the form;

(2) Confirm that no existing forms meet our needs by checking the following locations, as appropriate:

(a) The GSA Forms Library list of active SFs and OFs,

(b) OMB's list of CFs (see "Current Inventory of Common Forms" on the bottom of the page)

(c) The Department's Forms Repository,

(d) Office of Personnel Management (OPM) forms,

(e) U.S. Department of Labor forms, and

(f) Government Printing Office forms; and

(3) Search the appropriate Service forms repository to ensure there is not an existing or similar form.

B. If a new Service form is still necessary, coordinate development. Although the process for coordinating development and receiving approval on a form depends on whether it is for internal or public use, following are the general steps:

(1) Employees who need to develop a new Service form must contact their Program Forms Coordinator (see the FWS Internal Forms Library for a list of contacts). The developer should provide the contact with either a rough draft of a form or a list of requirements (including required fields, instructions, approvals, etc.) and a copy of the authorization for the form (e.g., directive, regulation).

(2) The Program Forms Coordinator creates or revises the form as necessary and coordinates with the developer to ensure that it captures all of their requirements. The Program Forms Coordinator also contacts the Service Forms Manager to ask for a placeholder form number.

(3) Once the draft is complete, the Program Forms Coordinator will also work with the APO and the ICCO as necessary to develop the appropriate compliance statements, such as the Privacy Act Statement or Notice, PRA, and estimated burden statements. The Coordinator should confirm with the APO and ICCO that the form meets all necessary privacy and PRA requirements before moving to the next step.

(4) When the draft form is complete and appropriate compliance statements have been added, the Program Forms Coordinator must send the form to the Service Forms Manager for his/her review. The Service Forms Manager coordinates with the Program Forms Coordinator to make any appropriate changes to the form and ensure that it is accessible. If necessary, the Program Forms Coordinator gives the revised draft back to the employee or employees who developed it to ensure that any edits are still in-line with their requirements. This process may include several rounds of revisions.

(5) The ICCO must review public use forms before they are finalized and will help developers obtain OMB approval, when necessary. Ideally, Program Forms Coordinators should work with the ICCO early in the process (see step 3) to begin the steps necessary to obtain OMB approval, since it can take 6-9 months to complete. See [281 FW 5] for more information.

(6) After all parties are in agreement about the content, layout, and format of the form, the Service Forms Manager finalizes the form. When it's complete, the Forms Manager approves the form and adds it to the appropriate forms library.

2.10 What are the planning requirements for new Service forms? As part of the forms planning process, form developers must:

A. Ensure that we capture only necessary and useful information on Service forms, especially public use forms. Employees designing forms should make an effort to limit the collection of PII to the extent possible.

B. Contact the ICCO to begin the OMB clearance process for public use forms as early as possible (at least 6-9 months prior to the date you intend to begin using the form).

C. Be prepared to do the following when developing a new form:

(1) Justify the need for collecting the data;

(2) Provide information on how the Service will use the data;

(3) Determine where the Service will store the information on completed forms; and

(4) Create a plan for disposing of forms and related information when it is no longer needed, in accordance with the applicable records management schedule.

D. Create Service forms exclusively in electronic format unless there is a legitimate business or mission-related need for the form to exist in a different medium. During the planning process, you should determine whether the form requires additional automation (such as embedding an automated workflow for approval and storage), or whether the form requires printing and distribution in hard copy. You should consider all requirements throughout the form lifecycle (e.g., data collection and use, storage needs, etc.) when deciding on the appropriate medium. The Service Forms Manager and the Branch of Printing and Publishing in External Affairs are available for additional assistance.

E. Ensure that the form fulfills all of the requirements of the authorizing policy, regulation, or other document.

2.11 What are the design and formatting requirements for Service forms?

A. We design Service forms (both for public and internal use) using the guidance in the *Forms Style Guide*. This includes displaying all necessary compliance statements and disclosures we discuss in section 2.8.

B. Public use forms must display a valid OMB control number and expiration date, as well as the required PRA and estimated burden statements, according to the format described in the *Forms Style Guide*.

C. To ensure that the form is Section 508-compliant, follow the instructions on the FWS Internal Forms Library to make the form accessible. You can find checklists and additional information on Section 508 compliance on the Section 508 SharePoint site and on GSA's Section 508 website.

2.12 How do form developers revise their existing Service forms? The Service Forms Manager (and the ICCO if it is a public use form) must approve revisions to Service forms.

A. Program Forms Coordinators should work with the authoring OPR and other stakeholders to identify any potential changes to the content, layout, or format of a form.

B. After making the changes on the draft, the Programs Forms Coordinator sends it to the Service Forms Manager for approval. The Service Forms Manager reviews the changes, working with the developer and other employees as necessary to ensure that the changes meet applicable requirements. After he/she approves the revised form, the Forms Manager updates the edition date of the form and posts the new version in the appropriate forms repository.

2.13 What are the requirements related to using and creating other types of official forms? Service employees who are tasked with designing or modifying a Departmental (i.e., DI) form or a Governmentwide form (such as an SF or OF) should work with their Program Forms Coordinator and the Service Forms Manager to ensure that applicable requirements are met. In addition to meeting the requirements in this chapter, employees should consult the following sources for design guidance, as appropriate:

A. FMR Part 193, "Creation, Maintenance, and Use of Forms" and FMR Part 194, "Standard and Optional Forms Management Program;"

B. GSA *Standard and Optional Forms Procedural Handbook*; and

C. The Department's *Forms Style Guide*.

PAPER COPIES OF FORMS

2.14 What are the requirements for requisitioning, reprinting, and stocking paper copies of forms?

A. Requisitioning – The requirements for requisitioning forms depend on the type of form.

(1) Obtain paper copies of SFs and OFs from GSA by sending an email to forms@gsa.gov or by calling GSA's Global Supply customer assistance at (800) 525-8027.

(2) Order Departmental forms through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Printed Materials Distribution Services (PMDS) in Denver. To order Service law enforcement-related forms through the BLM PMDS, complete and submit FWS Form 3-2350, PMDS Publications Requisition Form for

USFW.

(3) To requisition printing services related to Service forms, submit FWS Form 3-550, Publications Approval Request and Control Document through your chain of command to the Branch of Printing and Publishing in External Affairs. See 121 FW 1, Purpose, Policy, and Responsibilities for Printing for more information.

B. Reprinting – For those forms that must be printed, we must do so in the most economical manner possible. The OPR:

(1) Is responsible for reprinting and distribution of any forms with special printing requirements (such as forms that use special paper stock, etc.), and

(2) Must follow the requirements in 121 FW 1 and coordinate with the Branch of Printing and Publishing.

C. Forms Stocking – How many paper copy forms an OPR, office, or individual stocks depends on the frequency of use, potential for revision, and space available for stocking. To minimize obsolescence of stocks, we recommend you do not maintain more than a 1-year supply of any form.

/sgd/ Stephen Guertin
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Date: August 13, 2018