

1. Purpose and Scope. This chapter describes the communications and directives system authorized for the DCMWC. It establishes responsibilities and procedures for the issuance of policies, procedures, guidelines, and staff instructions; and documents the standards, guidelines, and instructions applicable to the preparation, clearance, approval, and publication of those directives.

2. Authority.

a. GSA's Federal Management Regulations requires, among other things, the establishment of agency directives that will:

(1) Establish and maintain a system for the classification, codification, and supplementation of agency directives.

(2) Document policies, standards, procedures, and standing instructions.

(3) Preserve directives as an integral part of agency documentation deserving permanent preservation.

(4) Describe in writing the standards, guides, and instructions developed for the preparation, clearance, and issuance of directives.

b. Departmental Regulations (DLMS 1-100 and OWCP PM 1-0100) require the DCMWC to maintain a directives management program in compliance with statutory, regulatory, departmental, and other requirements.

3. Authorized Directives for the DCMWC are those established by 1-0100 of the OWCP PM and include both internal and external releases as follows:

a. External Directives which may consist of either formal or informal releases or other documents.

(1) Formal Releases include Federal Register rules or notices pertaining thereto, and other written instructions which initiate or govern the actions, conduct, or procedures of the DCMWC and the public

when involved with programs administered under the authority of the Act, as amended.

(2) Informal Releases include pamphlets, notices, and other instructions or news releases published to inform the public of the availability of benefits.

b. Internal Directives fall into three categories: permanent (or indefinite-until-superseded), temporary or onetime, and informational.

(1) Permanent Directives include all standing instructions, policies, forms, form letters, guidelines, and procedures. They require specific performance or continuing activity and remain in force until rescinded or superseded and replaced. Included in this body of material are the following:

(a) BLBA Procedure Manual (BLBA PM), its component volumes, Parts, and supplements which are distributed by PM Transmittals.

(b) Other Guides include the DOL Correspondence Guide, DLMS Handbook 1-2, the GPO Style Manual, and other such guides as may be described in and authorized for use by the BLBA PM.

(2) Temporary/One-Time Directives are issued as BLBA Bulletins. They require or invite action from two or more district offices, concern DCMWC Division personnel, and are effective only until the required action is completed. Bulletins may involve one-time or special reports, pilot procedures, arrangements for training classes or rotating assignments over a specified period of time, or specific instructions affecting an operator/insurer whose business extends into more than one district. Bulletins must always bear an expiration date upon issue and a reference to any PM chapters affected. They may be discarded when expired or when required action is completed. Bulletins are published on blue letterhead.

(3) Informational Directives are issued as BLBA Circulars.

(a) Circulars require no specific action and are used to transmit copies of preliminary legal decisions, announcements of personnel changes, interesting events or activities, or other items of informational value; to call attention to standing instructions or performance standards which may require compliance or improvement; to announce proposed plans or anticipated program changes; or to keep field offices informed of the activities and interests of the NO.

(b) Circulars are reproduced on white letterhead.

(4) Other Communications are prohibited from use as standing instruction to DCMWC personnel. Letters and memorandums which are directive in nature are authorized only when they apply to a single case file or prescribe a one-time requirement or exception at a single location. All other written instructions on program matters shall be incorporated into and issued as parts of the above authorized directives system of the DCMWC.

4. Records Required. The record copy of each directive issued by the DCMWC shall be retained in the Office of the Director, OWCP. The record copy shall be accompanied by essential supporting documents, such as clearance forms and comments, and a copy of the document used to transmit the issuance, appropriately coded and cross-referenced in accordance with the standard subject matter correspondence classification codes established for the OWCP.

5. The Style and Format of the BLBA PM shall follow that illustrated in this Chapter and Exhibit 1. (See Exhibit 2 for the format of the Bulletin and Exhibit 3 for the BLBA Circular.)

a. Margins are as illustrated on this page and Exhibit 1.

b. Page Headings. The name of the Manual and Volume (if appropriate), the Part number and title, and the chapter number and title appear at the top of each page.

c. Paragraphs. The primary breakdown of the Chapter is the paragraph. Within each Chapter, each paragraph is designated by an Arabic numeral followed by a period. Each paragraph should be identified by a title typed one space after the number, in upper and lower case, and underlined. Paragraphs are subdivided as follows:

1. Paragraph

a. First Subdivision

(1) Second Subdivision

(a) Third Subdivision

(ii) Fourth Subdivision

d. Exhibits. Illustrations, graphics, reprints, charts, and other attachments will be appended to each Chapter as "EXHIBITS" and identified as in Exhibit 1. Exhibits will be arranged numerically behind the last page of each Part of the BLBA PM. They are numbered at the lower right corner and are paginated only when an Exhibit consists of more than one page.

e. Type Size and Style to be used for all BLBA directives shall be Courier New 12 or equivalent.

f. Other Guides.

(1) Lists of B Readers are transmitted by means of BLBA Bulletins.

(2) Computer System Guides are supplements of the BLBA PM and are transmitted by means of BLBA PM Transmittals.

6. Method of Issue. New and revised Chapters and pages of all Procedure Manuals are distributed by numbered PM Transmittals (Exhibit 4) containing an explanation of the material transmitted, and filing instructions for the removal of any superseded pages and the insertion of new or revised pages.

- a. Changes. Avoid the use of pen-and-ink changes. Use them only to change reference or form numbers or to correct typographical errors. For language changes, either minor or substantive, re-issue the entire page or chapter.
- b. Page Identification. Use a numbered paragraph title at the top of each page

7. Reproduction and Distribution is provided by the Office of the Director, OWCP. That Office processes the necessary printing requisitions and arranges for distribution to all manual holders. Distribution codes are structured to the number, level, and category of manual holders on a need-to-know basis.

8. Maintenance of Procedure Manuals. All employees are responsible for filing new material and maintaining it on an up-to-date basis. The Branch of Standards, Regulations, and Procedures also Maintains the PM by ensuring that the electronic version is available on the DCMWC intranet.

Procedure Manuals are subdivided into and maintained in separate volumes or binders by Part, chapter, and paragraph. Pages are numbered beginning with "1" within each chapter. Exhibits are filed numerically behind each individual Part or Chapter (Part 2 only) to which they pertain. Specific filing instructions for each new group of pages are included in the PM Transmittal. Transmittals may be filed at the beginning of each manual, or in a separate binder as manual sizes grow.

9. Responsibilities.

a. Development, Preparation, and Updating. Branch Chiefs and the staff of the Branch of Standards, Regulations, and Procedures are responsible for:

- (1) Preparing and updating standing instructions, policies, and procedures within their respective areas of program or administrative jurisdiction to reflect changes in laws and regulations, and significant BRB and court decisions.
- (2) Reviewing their various directives on a continuing and systematic basis to ensure that they are complete

and up-to-date, identifying subject voids and recommending corrective action.

(3) Maintaining accurate and up-to-date statements of their assigned functions, policies, and procedures in the OWCP PM and the BLBA PM.

(4) Preparing standing instructions that are easily understood, complete, up-to-date, and readily accessible on both a need-to-know and a need-to act basis

(5) Cooperating with the Office of the Director, OWCP, in applying standards and achieving program objectives; soliciting comments and suggestions from field installations; and coordinating with officials in other elements of the OWCP during the development or revision of material affecting their operations or instructions.

b. District Directors or their designees are responsible for ensuring that adequate copies of each appropriate Part of the BLBA PM are available at work places where they are needed and that designated employees keep the material up to date. They are also responsible for securing compliance with the provisions of the BLBA PM within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

c. Individual Employees of the DCMWC are responsible for following the procedures set forth in the BLBA PM, and for recommending additions, corrections, or other changes that will improve content or coverage, or make these directives easier to understand and more useful. Suggested improvements should be forwarded through appropriate channels to the Director, DCMWC.

10. Clearance and Review.

a. Within DCMWC. Personnel at both the National and District Offices will be given the opportunity to review and comment on proposed changes or additions to DCMWC directives.

b. Outside the DCMWC. The Chief of BSRP is responsible for clearing and coordinating issuances with other elements of the OWCP regarding procedures that might affect their operations; with the Office of the Director, OWCP in applying standards for uniformity and consistency; and, through channels, with other offices (Office of the Solicitor, Office of the Secretary, etc.) and other agencies (OMB, HHS, etc.) as appropriate.

c. Solicitor of Labor. The Office of the Solicitor is responsible for reviewing and clearing proposed directives to ensure consistency with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures, and for legal sufficiency. SOL also reviews directives when publication in the Federal Register is appropriate (DLMS 1-113c).