

NCA DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PROCEDURES

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This handbook revises procedures for preparing, approving, and publishing Directives Management Documents (DMD) containing official National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy and procedures.

2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES: Appendix G is updated to include a revised “Work Breakdown Structure” at Paragraph 6.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: National Cemetery Administration, Legislative and Regulatory Service (42E), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420 is responsible for the material contained in this handbook. Questions may be directed to the Director, Legislative and Regulatory Service.

4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:

- a. VA Directive 6330- Directives Management (February 26, 2009)
- b. VA Handbook 6330- Directives Management Procedures (October 21, 1993)
- c. NCA Directive 6330 – NCA Directives Management Program (August 30, 2016).

5. RESCISSION: NCA Handbook 6330 – NCA Directives, Handbooks, and Notices Procedures, dated August 30, 2016.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This handbook is scheduled for recertification the last day of February, 2022.

/s/
Ronald E. Walters
Interim Under Secretary
for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

**NCA DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PROCEDURES
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION I – OVERVIEW..... 1

 1. PURPOSE..... 1

 2. DEFINITIONS..... 1

 3. PROCESS OVERVIEW:..... 1

 4. REQUIRED FORMAT 2

SECTION II – DIRECTIVE, HANDBOOK, AND NOTICE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS 4

 1. POLICY PROJECT PLANNING PHASE..... 4

 2. DRAFTING PHASE:..... 4

 3. MANAGEMENT APPROVAL 5

 4. CONCURRENCE 5

 5. NONCONCURRENCE & RESOLUTION 6

 6. FINAL APPROVAL/ SIGNATURE STAGE..... 6

 7. PUBLICATION 7

SECTION III – CHANGES, RECERTIFICATIONS, AND RESCISSIONS 7

 1. CHANGES 7

 2. RECERTIFICATION..... 8

 3. RESCISSION..... 9

APPENDIX A – DOCUMENT SELECTION.....A-1

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE DIRECTIVE FORMAT.....B-1

APPENDIX C - SAMPLE HANDBOOK FORMAT C-1

APPENDIX D – SAMPLE APPENDIX FORMAT D-1

APPENDIX E – SAMPLE NOTICE FORMAT.....E-1

APPENDIX F – SAMPLE TRANSMITTAL SHEET FORMAT.....F-1

APPENDIX G – POLICY PROJECT PLANG-Error! Bookmark not defined.

APPENDIX H –LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS (LMR) REVIEW OF NCA POLICY DOCUMENTS..... H-1

 APPENDIX I –NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note for Directives, HANDBOOKS, AND Notices I-1

SECTION I – OVERVIEW

1. PURPOSE: This National Cemetery Administration handbook updates procedures for creating and disseminating official NCA-wide policy and procedure. It contains mandatory procedures for preparing, approving, and publishing directives, handbooks, and notices, including style, format, and process standards. Districts, cemeteries, and program offices may devise appropriate standard operating procedures (SOPs) of a similar nature for their publication.

NOTE: *SOPs, as defined in the Directives Management Directive, are not subject to the NCA Directives Management Program Procedures.*

2. DEFINITIONS

a. Directives Management Document (DMD). An official statement of NCA policy or procedure that is applicable across all NCA facilities and to all NCA employees. NCA uses three types of DMDs: directive, handbook, and notice. **NOTE:** *Appendix A provides a chart to assist staff in determining the appropriate directives management document to select.*

b. Directive. A directive establishes mandatory NCA policies applicable to all NCA facilities and employees.

c. Handbook. A handbook describes mandatory procedures for implementing NCA programs and/or policy defined in a related directive. A handbook may be issued without a related directive.

d. Notice. A notice reminds NCA staff of existing policy or procedures or announces new or revised policy or procedures, which will be incorporated in a current or future directive or handbook.

e. NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note. An internal NCA document providing a high level summary of a directive, handbook, or notice used to brief the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) prior to final approval of the subject document.

f. Recertification. The review and republication of an official NCA DMD. Recertification is required every five (5) years. Documents remain in effect until a replacement document is published or the original document is rescinded.

g. Rescission. Revocation or removal of a document as an official NCA DMD. Rescission is accomplished by publishing a replacement document or Notice of Rescission.

3. PROCESS OVERVIEW: The process for developing and disseminating a directive, handbook, or notice includes the following phases:

a. Project Planning: Consideration of the need for a new or revised directive, handbook, or notice and formal definition of the scope of the project and content of proposed document.

b. Drafting/Informal review: The writing and revision of a directive, handbook, or notice. All intermediate versions and consultation with stakeholders outside the program office occur in this phase.

c. Approval: This phase includes the formal approval process by senior management, use of VA's official concurrence system, and the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs' signature.

d. Publication: Final processing of the document in preparation for posting to internal and external webpages designed for the purpose of maintaining directives, handbooks, and notices.

e. Recertification: The process of reviewing the published policy document at least eight months prior to the recertification date. The Originating/Responsible Office shall review the published directive or handbook to determine if the document should be revised, rescinded, or recertified with no changes.

4. REQUIRED FORMAT

a. **Directives** have a required format consisting of specific paragraphs and headings; a sample is provided in Appendix B. The length of a directive should be limited to convey policy and high level responsibilities only. Short procedures may be included as an appendix to the directive if the information is needed by the user and the amount of information does not justify publishing a separate handbook of procedures (see Appendix D for appendix example). All NCA directives must adhere to the following format:

- (1) Transmittal Sheet (see paragraph d. below)
- (2) Purpose/Authority
- (3) Background (optional)
- (4) Policy
- (5) Responsibilities
- (6) References
- (7) Definitions (optional)
- (8) Appendix (optional)

b. **Handbooks** have a required format consisting of specific paragraphs and headings; a sample is provided in Appendix C. Handbooks may be of any length sufficient to explain procedures or operational requirements. Forms and other reference materials (such as checklists, illustrations, etc.) referred to in the body of the text should be attached as handbook appendices. All NCA handbooks must adhere to the following format:

- (1) Transmittal Sheet (see paragraph d. below)
- (2) Table of Contents (optional)
- (3) Purpose/Authority
- (4) Background (optional)
- (5) Definitions (optional)
- (6) Scope
- (7) Other paragraphs, as needed
- (8) References (optional)
- (9) Appendix (optional)

c. **Notices** have a required format consisting of specific paragraphs and headings; a sample notice is provided in Appendix E. Notices may be of any length sufficient to explain changes to policy, procedures or operational requirements, or other information. All NCA notices must adhere to the following format:

- (1) Purpose/Reason For Issue
- (2) Background (optional)
- (3) Change to Policy/Procedures (if applicable)
- (4) Responsible Office
- (5) Rescission
- (6) Expiration
- (7) Signature

d. **A Transmittal sheet** is a required element for all directives and handbooks. It is not a stand-alone document. Transmittal sheets have a required format to convey essential information about the directive or handbook in a summary format (see Appendix F). Transmittal sheets bear the formal signature for the underlying directive or handbook. All NCA transmittal sheets must adhere to the following format:

- (1) Reason for Issue
- (2) Summary of Content (new) or Summary of Major Changes (revision)
- (3) Responsible Office
- (4) Related Publications

- (5) Rescissions
- (6) Recertification
- (7) Signature

SECTION II – DIRECTIVE, HANDBOOK, AND NOTICE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. POLICY PROJECT PLANNING PHASE:

a. Formal development or revision of a directive or handbook begins with planning and culminates in the completion of a policy project plan. A template for a policy project plan can be found in Appendix G. The Originating/Responsible Office should conduct significant research and initiate policy discussions within the program office (including any field units) prior to completing a project plan to ensure the proposal for a new or revised policy includes guidelines or updates issued since the previous publication of the subject document. Legislative and Regulatory Service (LRS) will assist the Originating/Responsible Office accountable for the directive or handbook in completing the project plan. The Originating/Responsible Office, with support from LRS, will present the project plan during the Policy Mail Call/Management Briefing to obtain or confirm senior management approval of the proposed policy direction. After approval by senior management, the Originating/Responsible Office will finalize the project plan, and the Director, LRS, and a representative of the Originating/Responsible Office (director or higher) will sign the project plan.

b. A notice may not require a policy project plan and may circulate through an expedited review and approval process. A program office interested in publishing a notice must email LRS at NCA42EACTION@va.gov; include the proposed document content, background, references and policy discussions. LRS will facilitate the request through management review for notice publication concurrence, in lieu of a directive or handbook, and advise the program office of the decision and procedures for expedited review and approval.

2. DRAFTING PHASE: Drafting includes the initial writing of a directive, handbook, or notice and all intermediate revisions based on consultation and comments from stakeholders. The Originating/Responsible Office is responsible for drafting the document with the assistance of LRS staff. Drafters must follow these guidelines:

a. Present information clearly and simply.

(1) Use active voice.

(2) State the rule, then the exception.

b. Use Microsoft Word only. Templates are available from LRS staff and can also be found on the Legislative and Regulatory tab on the NCA Intranet.

c. Identify rescissions. Identify any existing NCA publication(s), such as handbooks, directives, past policy letters, or notices, that will be replaced by the new or

revised document. Incorporate applicable information in the new draft and list rescinded documents on the Transmittal Sheet.

d. Verify citations and references. Check all citations and references to websites or other materials to ensure that they are accurate and current by following the citation or link.

e. Obtain stakeholder input. The Originating/Responsible Office will determine the appropriate stakeholders required and disseminate the document for feedback. Edits must be submitted using track changes and comments in the Word document.

f. Director, LRS, has final determination regarding document format and will assign the functional numbering to the DMD prior to USMA signature.

3. MANAGEMENT APPROVAL

a. The Originating/Responsible Office point of contact (POC) and supporting staff members are expected to consult with management in their program office during the drafting phase and stakeholder review to ensure content continues to reflect management's position, as outlined in the project plan. If required, the Originating/Responsible Office POC must advise his/her management of the need to deviate from the original plan.

b. Management should contact (or direct POC to contact) LRS staff to update the project plan, if necessary. The Originating/Responsible Office POC must obtain final review and approval by management (stage 3 of policy project plan) before the concurrence process begins. Documents will not be entered into concurrence until the Deputy Under Secretary (DUS), including the Principal Deputy Under Secretary (PDUS), over the relevant program office indicates approval of the document on the review and concurrence summary sheet.

4. CONCURRENCE

a. The Legislative and Regulatory Service will manage the electronic concurrence process for each DMD. After management review, LRS staff will create a folder in the electronic concurrence system to enter the review and concurrence summary sheet and make concurrence assignments to only the top level offices (i.e., 41, 42, 43, and PDUS). Each DUS shall determine which program offices within his/her responsibility will be assigned to review the folder. Internal responses/discussion should not be entered into the electronic concurrence system, but should be resolved internally. The DUS/PDUS will determine if any edits or comments from subordinate program offices or field staff should be included in the single formal concurrence from the DUS/PDUS. Any edits to the document must be submitted to LRS by the assigned due date using track changes in the Word document. Handwritten edits will be returned to the submitter for conversion to track changes.

b. LRS will simultaneously electronically assign all policy documents to the Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) for concurrence, as noted in Appendix H.

c. A DUS/PDUS or LMR may request an extension of the deadline for concurrence by contacting the LRS POC. The Director, LRS will approve extensions based on justification and expected date of completion and the LRS POC will communicate the decision in writing to the requestor. Extensions may be granted for up to 10 business days. Additional time will not be granted for subordinate program offices involved during stakeholder review to review the document.

d. LRS staff will contact the responsible DUS or LMR representative if a response is not entered by the deadline (including any extended deadline). If a response is not received within one business day after the deadline or extended deadline, LRS staff will report the lack of requested concurrence(s) on the Policy Mail Call Briefing Note (see Appendix I).

e. The LRS POC will consolidate all tracked changes from the concurrence process into a final draft for review and approval by the Originating/Responsible Office POC. If the changes are substantive, the Originating/Responsible Office POC will obtain final approval from the DUS/PDUS of their office, who will determine if other DUSs and LMR must re-concur. Re-concurrence is not required if edits are non-substantive or if all edits are accepted.

5. NONCONCURRENCE & RESOLUTION

a. A reviewing official who non-concurs should email the LRS POC of the reason(s) for the non-concurrence as soon as possible, include the revised draft, and provide the name and number of an individual (if other than the reviewing official) who will help resolve any concerns.

b. LRS staff will facilitate a discussion between the offices. If the Originating/Responsible Office and reviewing office(s) cannot agree on an informal resolution, the non-concurring office(s) must prepare a brief written statement of non-concurrence summarizing the reason(s) the change should/should not be made. The written materials must be in a clear, concise format for inclusion on the Policy Mail Call Briefing Note to facilitate higher level review/approval. Both the Originating/Responsible Office and non-concurring office(s) may be required to present at the Policy Mail Call, if additional information is needed. The Final Review/Concur Sheet for the policy document will request USMA decision regarding the contested issue. The USMA will inform LRS staff, the Originating/Responsible Office, and reviewing offices of the final decision. LRS will maintain a copy of the explanatory materials and final action in the historical record for reference.

6. FINAL APPROVAL/ SIGNATURE STAGE

a. The LRS POC will assign the final version of the document (without tracked changes), relevant supporting information, and the Policy Mail Call Briefing Note in the electronic concurrence process through the COS to the USMA for approval.

b. The Originating/Responsible Office, with the support of LRS staff, will present the final DMD during the policy mail call prior to forwarding for USMA review.

c. The COS may schedule an ad hoc policy mail call with the Originating/Responsible Office and LRS POC if the USMA has additional questions. If the USMA requests substantive edits or a change in the policy direction, the policy project plan may be revised to repeat the review process in the work breakdown structure.

d. The USMA will sign the document for publication and dissemination if he/she approves the policy document as is or with minor/editorial or technical changes and LMR has concurred or concurred with comments.

e. The USMA is the only official approved to sign NCA directives, handbooks and notices after review and concurrence by the COS, Deputy Under Secretaries (and any subordinate program office they deem appropriate), and other VA offices/staff (if appropriate).

7. PUBLICATION

a. LRS staff will process the document for publication after the USMA signs. Final processing includes ensuring compliance with publication guidelines, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. LRS will forward the document to the NCA Web Communications Officer to post to internal and external webpages designed for the purpose of maintaining directives, handbooks, and notices.

b. Concurrently with the electronic posting, the COS will coordinate electronic notification of the document posting to NCA managers and employees and other staff, as appropriate. Key management officials are responsible for further dissemination of the document.

c. All directives, handbooks and notices currently in effect are available to NCA staff through posting on the NCA Intranet at <http://vaww.nca.va.gov>, Legislative & Regulatory Service tab.

SECTION III – CHANGES, RECERTIFICATIONS, AND RESCISSIONS

1. CHANGES

a. Changes to directives and handbooks may be required for many reasons, such as a change in program operations, legislative or regulatory action, or other events that affect NCA policies and procedures. Three types of changes are recognized:

(1) Editorial changes are corrections to fix spelling or other minor errors and can be made by LRS staff at any time. Any NCA staff member may submit suggested changes to LRS at any time in any format, e.g., notation on a hard copy page or an electronic message, proposing a minor revision. LRS will inform the Originating/Responsible Office of the editorial change and a copy of the amended document will be placed in the official history file and posted. No change will be made to the recertification date. No editorial changes will be made during the eight months prior to the recertification date because the document will be undergoing substantive review.

(2) Technical revisions are routine updates of information to directives and handbooks, such as program or personnel titles, phone numbers of contact persons, website addresses, or mail routing codes. Staff may submit suggested technical revisions to LRS at any time in any format, e.g., notation on a hard copy page or an electronic message, proposing a minor revision. LRS staff will request approval by the Originating/Responsible Office of the suggested revision. No change will be made to the recertification date. No technical changes will be made during the eight months prior to the recertification date because the document will be undergoing substantive review.

(3) Substantive revisions are revisions that change existing policy or procedure requirements or the scope of the directive or handbook. Substantive changes must be submitted to LRS staff in writing (e-mail is acceptable) and include the name and contact information of the individual making the suggestion, a markup of the suggested change, and hard copy of any background material (copy of new regulation, new or revised procedures, reorganization chart, etc.) that would help to explain or justify the proposed change(s). LRS staff will request approval by the Originating/Responsible Office of the suggested revision. The entire document will be recertified and published with a new effective date any time substantive changes are required, including during the eight months prior to the recertification date.

b. The Originating/Responsible Office will include detailed information about new, revised, or deleted information concerning the DMD in the Summary of Changes entry on the document Transmittal Sheet for editorial changes and technical and substantive revisions.

2. RECERTIFICATION

a. Recertification is required every five (5) years for directives and handbooks. The transmittal sheet of each directive and handbook will state the date by which the document must be recertified.

b. The Originating/ Responsible Office will review and update document content, cite references, changes in operating procedures, and new regulations or other guidance issued by NCA, VA, or other oversight authority.

c. LRS staff will notify the Originating/Responsible Office in writing (electronic mail acceptable) at least eight months prior to the recertification date of a directive or handbook. The notification will include any known changes to the authority for the directive or handbook, the published version of the subject directive or handbook in Microsoft Word format, and the policy project plan template. The Originating/Responsible Office must reply within five (5) business days, indicating one of the following options for the subject directive or handbook:

(1) Republish with no changes (recertify); or

(2) Republish with changes (revise). If the document requires revisions for any reason, the Originating/ Responsible Office will complete the project plan and follow the process set forth in Section II of this document to revise the document; or

- (3) Officially rescind.

3. RESCISSION

- a. NCA directives and handbooks remain in effect until they are replaced by an updated version of the document or rescinded by a Notice of Rescission. Rescission makes a document obsolete through replacement of new guidance or when considered no longer in effect. Rescission may occur if the document is invalid or information has been transferred to another document.

- b. A notice rescinding an existing document is subject to the same concurrence process as other policy documents, to give stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback or reasons why the document should not be rescinded.

APPENDIX A – DOCUMENT SELECTION

IF YOU ARE ---	USE ---
Formalizing and explaining policy that all National Cemetery Administration (NCA) staff in all locations and program offices are required to follow.	An NCA Directive (See Section I, 3.(a)).
Formalizing procedures or operational guidelines that all NCA staff in all locations and program offices are required to follow when carrying out a particular program or function.	An NCA Handbook (See Section I, 3.(b)).
Changing or updating policies or procedures already published in a directive or handbook.	See Changes, Section III, 1. NOTE: <i>If the new or revised information is time-sensitive, use an NCA Notice for immediate dissemination and make the required change to the appropriate directive or handbook within six months.</i>
Issuing a reminder of existing policies or procedures.	An NCA Notice (See Section I, 3.(c)).
Announcing new policy or procedures that will be included in a new or revised directive or handbook.	An NCA Notice (See Section I, 3.(c)).

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE DIRECTIVE FORMAT

*(Template available on NCA Intranet)
(See Appendix F for sample transmittal sheet)*

{Issue Date}

NCA Directive XXXX

DIRECTIVE TITLE GOES HERE

1. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY: This is a required entry. Information can be provided in one paragraph or broken into subparagraphs, as appropriate.

a. State the **reason** for establishing the directive, such as:

“The purpose of this National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Directive is to define, authorize, or implement _____ concerning _____” or

b. If the directive **policy is or is not limited** to a particular function or group, explain the scope of effect.

c. Include any information about the statutory or regulatory requirements or authorities related to the policy stated in the directive. These might include citations from Public Law, the United States Code, or the Code of Federal Regulations.

2. BACKGROUND: This is an optional entry. A brief background summary of relevant information may be provided if it will help the reader better understand the purpose of the directive.

3. POLICY: This is a required entry. Briefly state NCA policy on the subject matter addressed in the directive.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES: This is a required entry. Briefly list the responsibilities and action requirements for offices and/or staff (use titles and functions, not names of individuals) involved in implementing the policies stated in the directive. The Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs will always have responsibility for overall administration of NCA cemeteries and programs.

NOTE: *If procedural requirements are short they may be included in the directive, but if there are specific lengthy procedures that need to be presented they should be put into an accompanying handbook.*

5. REFERENCES: Cite any references pertinent to the directive subject matter, such as statutes, regulations, or other documents. Use complete titles. Include any identifying information such as edition dates, authors, legal citations, etc., and information about electronic availability. For example:

a. VA Directive 6330 - Directives Management and VA Handbook 6330 - Directives

Management Procedures (February 26, 2009) (internal- available electronically at <http://vaww1.va.gov/vapubs/>)

b. Executive Order 13423, “Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management” (available electronically at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/>)

6. DEFINITIONS: This is an optional entry, but if it is used, this is the required title. Define terms used in the directive that readers may not know; definitions should be consistent with descriptions in the global glossary and other NCA documents.

a. **Directives** are the only official document used to present mandatory NCA-wide policy.

b. **Handbooks** are the only official document used to present mandatory NCA-wide procedures or operational requirements that implement policies contained in directives.

c. **Notices** are used to provide important information involving or of interest to NCA and/or other VA staff; and to make official announcements. Notices may be used to disseminate urgent policy changes.

7. APPENDIX: This is an optional entry, but if it is used, this is the required title. Appendices can be used to provide detailed instructions, checklists, copies of referenced forms, etc. Appendices should use unique numbered pages (A-1, A-2, etc.).

APPENDIX C - SAMPLE HANDBOOK FORMAT*(Template available on NCA Intranet)**(See Appendix F for sample transmittal sheet)*

{Issue Date}

NCA Handbook XXXX

HANDBOOK TITLE GOES HERE

Handbooks are used to state procedures and/or operational requirements. The required format of headers and paragraphs is below. If a handbook covers multiple subject areas or procedures and is broken into “sections,” a Table of Contents and/or Index may be helpful.

- 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS:** This is a required entry for any handbook that contains more than one section.
- 2. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY:** This is a required entry. Used in NCA handbooks to state (or if there is an accompanying directive, to restate) the reason for establishing or revising the handbook. If the procedures are limited to a particular function or group, explain that here. Include any information about the statutory or regulatory requirements or authorities that are related to the procedures set forth in the handbook. (These would include citations from Public Law, the United States Code, or the Code of Federal Regulations.)
- 3. BACKGROUND:** This is an optional entry. A brief background summary of relevant information may be provided if it will help the reader better understand the purpose of the directive.
- 4. DEFINITIONS:** This is an optional entry, but if it is used, this is the required title. Define terms used in the directive that readers may not know, definitions should be consistent with descriptions in the global glossary and other NCA documents.
- 5. SCOPE:** This is a required entry. The text of the handbook should outline the procedures and operational requirements, stating specifics of who is to do what, at the program level, to ensure that NCA policies and procedures are carried out properly and consistently at all NCA facilities.
- 6. OTHER PARAGRAPHS:** This is an optional entry, and should be listed as needed to explain additional operational requirements of specific headings and paragraphs related to the scope.
- 7. REFERENCES:** Handbooks may include lists of specific reference materials that can provide background information or more specific details about certain aspects of the procedures and operations outlined in the handbook. Include any identifying information about the references cited such as edition dates, authors, legal citations, etc., and information about electronic availability.
- 8. APPENDICES:** Appendices can be used to provide detailed instructions, checklists, copies of referenced forms, etc. Appendices should use unique numbered pages (A-1, A-2, etc.).

APPENDIX D – SAMPLE APPENDIX FORMAT

{Issue Date}

NCA HANDBOOK XXXX

APPENDIX D – SAMPLE APPENDIX

- a. Appendices are used to provide detailed instructions, checklists, copies of referenced forms, designs and/or illustrations, etc.
- b. There should be a heading identifying the appendix in alphabetical order (A, B, C, etc.) and giving the title. This heading should be in upper case bold characters, centered and underlined.
- c. Appendices should use unique numbering for pages (A-1, A-2, etc.). There is no standard format for appendix content or format, the layout is dictated by the subject matter.
- d. If the appendix contents are not formatted as a Microsoft Word document, the Originating/ Responsible Program Office must supply clear hard copy of the material(s). 42E staff will work with the program office and appropriate information technology staff to facilitate conversion of the material to electronic form suitable for posting.

APPENDIX E – SAMPLE NOTICE FORMAT

(Template available on NCA Intranet)

Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420
{Issue Date}

NCA Notice YEAR-##

NOTICE TITLE GOES HERE

1. PURPOSE/REASON FOR ISSUE: This is a required entry. Clearly explain what information is being provided or announced and why. Reasons for publishing notices include:

- a. Quickly providing important information involving or of interest to NCA staff;
- b. Announcing new policy or procedures that will be incorporated in future directives or handbooks; or
- c. Reminding NCA staff of existing policy or procedures.

2. BACKGROUND: This is an optional entry, and should be kept brief. If the notice was triggered by a particular event, or a new or revised statute or regulation, that should be stated here.

3. CHANGE TO POLICY/PROCEDURES: This is a required entry. Briefly describe the new or revised policy or procedures, and state if the information will be incorporated into an existing directive or handbook (the specific number and title should be cited), or a new directive or handbook will be created. **NOTE:** *Because notices expire after six months, unless otherwise specified or renewed, they should be incorporated into a directive or handbook if the notice contains policy or procedures.*

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: This is a required entry. National Cemetery Administration, Office of _____, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this notice. If desired, an additional line can be used to state “Questions may be referred to _____. *{insert position title or office name, do not use names of individuals}*”

5. RESCISSION: This is a required entry. State whether an existing publication is rescinded (in full or part).

6. EXPIRATION: This is a required entry. All notices are archived six months after issue date unless otherwise specified. Notices may be officially renewed one time, for an additional six month time period.

*Name Of Official
Under Secretary
for Memorial Affairs*

Distribution: Electronic

APPENDIX F – SAMPLE TRANSMITTAL SHEET FORMAT

(Template available on NCA Intranet)

Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420
Transmittal Sheet
{Issue Date}

NCA _____ XXXX

DIRECTIVE/HANDBOOK TITLE GOES HERE

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: State the reason for issuing the new or revised document.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/CHANGES: Modify heading if appropriate, e.g., omit “Contents” or “Changes” if not applicable. Briefly summarize document content or changes – see sample subparagraphs below:

a. Policy regarding information document is revised in Sections I and II to conform to new guidance issued by VA Directives Management Office.

b. Paragraph 4.c.(2) is removed in its entirety because carbon copies are no longer used in the publication process.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: This is a required entry. National Cemetery Administration, Office of _____, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this *directive/handbook*. If desired, an additional line can be used to state “Questions may be referred to *{insert position title or office name, do not use names of individuals}*.”

4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS: List any NCA directives or handbooks related to this document, or enter “None.”

5. RESCISSIONS: List any previous NCA documents or guidance replaced by this new document, or enter “None.” If the Transmittal Sheet is being used to completely rescind an existing document, that should be clearly noted here.

6. RECERTIFICATION: Use to indicate when review/update of the document is necessary. VA policy requires review and action on directives and handbooks every five years. Entry should read “This document is scheduled for recertification on or before _____ the last day of *{insert month of signature plus five years}*.”

Name Of Official
Under Secretary
for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

APPENDIX G – POLICY PROJECT PLAN

Policy Project Plan Summary

Create a separate Policy Project Plan for each document being created.

Project	42E POC	Program Office POC	Target completion date
<i>Project Identifier/Project name</i>			<i>Insert date from timetable in Paragraph 6 below.</i>

Project Plan

1. Definition of need for new/revised policy:

Reason for new policy or change (cite authority if possible); i.e., identify change to authorities or to procedures that requires new or revised policy); include information on whether target completion date is flexible or must be met and why.

The reason for new policy or change, with appropriate authority citations, should be listed in this section. If the project is a revision to an existing policy, drafters should consider whether a complete recertification is advisable/required (see section II, 1). In addition to a directive or handbook, Legislative and Regulatory Services staff will advise on the need for a regulation.

Details concerning flexibility of the target completion date for publication should be clearly articulated to aid in priority identification and implementation for the program office, NCA and/or VA.

2. Project Description

Summarize the proposed policy: Include information regarding specific policy decisions that have been made regarding the subject matter.

The proposed policy should be summarized and include specific policy decisions that have been made regarding the subject matter. These decisions may have been determined by NCA Leadership via collaborative discussions and/or advisement with affiliates (e.g., labor partners, community partners, congressional staff, the Office of General Counsel, etc.).

3. Potential Stakeholders

Identify offices (e.g., historians, finance, contracting, field staff) that will be consulted in development process)

Determine who “needs to know” and “who needs to act” on the subject matter included in the draft document. Program offices should provide 42E staff with a list of offices and/or staff (NCA or VA) that should provide input to the draft(s) and be asked for final review and concurrence. In most instances, NCA Employee Relations/Labor Relations division (ER/LR) (see Appendix H) and district directors should be considered as stakeholders. Historians may be considered stakeholders regarding objects or activities related to NCA historical and cultural materials and resources.

4. Reference Document Inventory

Identify all relevant existing document(s) that will be revised or rescinded by the new document. List any document by name and number; fully explain the proposed policy:

This reference document inventory section ensures related publications are referenced and revised accordingly or dispositioned to promote succinct and consolidated communication of NCA policy. List all existing documents, such as Directives, Handbooks, Notices, Forms, Standard operating procedures, and other policy memorandums; inclusive of title, identifier number, and date of publication; that will be revised or rescinded by the new document. Fully explain how the proposed policy updates or rescinds the current document in the description column; list the source and other information regarding the proposed policy. Indicate, in “Anticipated Disposition” whether the reference documents listed in the inventory will be revised or rescinded by the policy document being developed.

Document Type	Identifier (Directive or Handbook number; date or title of memo; etc.)	Description/Source/Other info	Anticipated disposition of existing document (will the new document rescind or revise the existing document)
Directive			
Handbook			
Notice			
Forms			
SOPs			
Other (Policy Memos, etc.)			

5. Objectives/Strategic Goals

<p>In addition to Objective 5.2 and Strategy 5.2.1. of NCA’s Long Range Plan (applicable to ALL policies), the program office should list pertinent objectives of the proposed DMD and identify the corresponding NCA strategic goals furthered by the proposed policy. The NCA Long Range Plan is located on the NCA home intranet page.</p>	
<i>Project Objective</i>	<i>NCA Strategic Goal</i>
<p>1. Provide clear policy and guidance for all stakeholders.</p>	<p>2. Objective 5.2: By the end of 2021, increase the effectiveness of our policies, processes, and tools to improve the quality, consistency, and reliability of our outcomes. a. Strategy 5.2.1: Update or write all necessary policy and regulations and electronically publish and archive these documents to allow easy referencing and searching</p>

6. Work Breakdown Structure

Stage	Step	Responsible Office	PROJECTED Schedule	
			Start Date	Completion Date
Stage 1: Project Plan				
	a. Policy discussion	Program Office		
	b. Initial Management Briefing	Program Office		
	c. Finalize project plan	Program Office		
Stage 2: Drafting				
	a. First draft PO	Program Office		
	b. First review 42E	42E		
	c. Second Draft PO	Program Office		
	d. Second Review 42E	42E		
	e. Stakeholder review	Program Office		
	f. Stakeholder edits; 3rd Draft PO	Program Office		
Stage 3: Program Management Approval				
	a. Final Draft 42E	42E		
	b. Management review PO	Program Office		
	c. Incorporate Mgmt edits; Final Draft PO	Program Office		
Stage 4: Concurrence				
	a. Prepare Concurrence Draft 42E	42E		
	b. Concurrence Process	42E		
	c. Review and Incorporate edits from concurrence PO	Program Office		

			Start Date	Completion Date
Stage 5: USMA review and approval				
	a. Final editing/Processing 42E	42E		
	b. USMA Mail Call	42E		
	c. Create FINAL for USMA signature 42E	42E		

7. Risk(s)

#	Description	Probability %	Impact 1= low; 5 = high
1			
2			

8. Acknowledgement

Director, 42E/Date	Program Office/Date
--------------------	---------------------

APPENDIX H –LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS (LMR) REVIEW OF NCA POLICY DOCUMENTS

1. ISSUE: Refine concurrence process to ensure that NCA policies with potential impact on bargaining unit employees are flagged for review by the Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) and the NCA Employee and Labor Relations (ER/LR, 43A8) division of the Human Capital Management Office (43A6). The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (5 U.S.C. Chapter 71) and Collective Bargaining Agreements with our unions require that in certain circumstances, VA submit formal notice to the unions and allow the unions an opportunity to bargain prior to initiating new policies or changing existing policies. LMR is responsible for ensuring that timely notice of proposed changes is provided to the unions.

2. KEY POINTS:

a. Program offices may not correctly identify policies with potential and significant impact to Bargaining Unit (BU) employees.

b. ER/LR will assist NCA program offices by identifying those policies that likely meet the requirement for review by labor representatives, but the final decision on whether labor must review rests with LMR.

c. LMR and ER/LR should be included in the stakeholder review and concurrence process for new and changed policies. A policy that requires union review will be sent to the unions once all the concurrences are final and the policy is in final version, but before the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs' (USMA) signature and final implementation.

d. Executive Order 13522, *Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services*, requires VA management officials to include the unions pre-decisionally in "all workplace matters to the fullest extent practicable." The term "pre-decisional involvement," typically involves inviting the unions to participate in task forces or work groups developing policy prior to any change being initiated. At the national level, LMR would send such invitations to the union national officials via the National Partnership Council.

e. Pre-Decisional involvement can be achieved by inviting the unions to participate in task forces or work groups developing policy during the "stakeholder review" (see Step One below). LMR would send such invitations to the unions, via the National Partnership Council.

3. PROCESS:

a. **Step One:** Include ER/LR as a stakeholder for review of draft policy documents, for the specific purpose of providing an indication whether the policy will need to be passed through labor partners. This will ensure that NCA has in mind whether the

document will be subject to review by labor (through LMR) at a later point. This is the appropriate time to request LMR to invite “pre-decisional involvement” by the unions in development of the policy or change in the policy.

b. **Step Two:** Include LMR in the formal concurrence process, VA Intranet Quorum (VAIQ) until Correspondence Tracking System (CTS) is fully implemented. To formalize the inclusion of LMR, Legislative and Regulatory Service (42E) will make an assignment to LMR for concurrence on all documents. When revisions have been made to update or replace an existing NCA policy, the changes between the preceding policy and the updated policy must be adequately identified by the NCA program office and 42E. The changes should be easily identifiable for LMR and union review, using “track changes” (including strikethroughs for deletions of existing language and underlining insertions for new language). The assignment to LMR should be made after the Office of General Counsel (OGC) has concurred (if applicable) in the document to ensure that the document meets legal standards. The chart below defines what possible concurrence responses LMR may make and what actions must be taken depending on the nature of LMR’s concurrence.

<i>If</i>	<i>Then</i>	<i>And</i>	<i>Handling</i>
LMR concurs (without comment or condition).	No union notice required.	Note in NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note that Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) can sign without delay.	Normal document processing.
LMR concurs with COMMENT that the unions must be given a copy “FYI.”	Union notice is required only for information; no delay in implementation.	Note in NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note that USMA can sign without delay.	Normal document processing; document must be provided to LMR after the USMA signs; LMR provides to unions “FYI.”
LMR provides a CONDITIONAL concurrence that unions must be given time to review and make demand for bargaining.	Policy may not be implemented until time expires without demand to bargain OR demand to bargain is made but time for bargaining expires without union proposals OR demand is made and negotiations conclude.	Note in NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note that USMA may NOT sign until time expires without demand OR demand is made and negotiations conclude.	Copy of final document must be provided to LMR before the USMA signs; LMR will advise when document may be signed.

c. 42E must ensure that LMR's concurrence/response is noted on the NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note. Attached is an edited version of the Briefing Note showing one way this might be captured. Processing of document continues as normal until the Policy Mail Call. If LMR concurrence is either 1 or 2 in chart above, USMA can sign as normal. After final document is prepared, 42E must send the final, signed document electronically to LMR to be provided "FYI" to unions.

d. If LMR concurrence is 3 in chart above, labor has up to 20 business days, depending on labor contract, to demand to bargain on the content of the policy that impacts the employees the union represents. The timeframe may vary if the union requests additional information or extensions; LMR will track the timeframe for a response from labor representatives. During this time, 42E will hold the policy concurrence folder and will provide LMR with an electronic copy of the unsigned "final" version of the document. If the unions do not make a demand to bargain within the allotted time, LMR will notify 42E that the policy may be signed by USMA. 42E will return the file to the Policy Mail Call for final processing.

e. If the unions demand to bargain, USMA signature and implementation must await the outcome of the negotiation. The NCA ER/LR Director and an NCA representative from the responsible office of the policy document will provide expertise and serve on the LMR negotiation team. Negotiation can be a lengthy process; hence, LMR will track the timeframe for a response from labor representatives. 42E will continue to hold the concurrence folder until the negotiations are complete. Bargaining may result in the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NCA and labor partners. Once bargaining is complete, LMR will notify 42E that bargaining is complete and will update the LMR concurrence in VAIQ. 42E will update the Policy Mail Call Briefing Note to reflect that LMR's conditional concurrence is cleared and refresh the dates on the document and forward the document for USMA signature. Processing continues as normal.

**APPENDIX I –NCA Policy Mail Call Briefing Note for Directives, HANDBOOKS,
AND Notices**

SUBJECT:

VAIQ #:

NCA POC:

Concurrences:

Phone:

(List all Program Offices mail codes and titles)

QUESTION	RESPONSE
1. Is this a NCA or VA Directive, Handbook, or Notice ?	
2. If this is a Notice and you require longer than the automatic 6-month rescission, state the date of rescission you need and justification for the extension.	
3. Is this a NEW Directive/Handbook, or is this an UPDATE to an existing Directive/Handbook?	
4. Why is the Directive/Handbook being published (i.e., cite new legislation, regulations, policy decisions)?	
5. If this is not new, what are the changes from the last issued Directive/Handbook compared to the newly issued Directive/Handbook (cite page numbers corresponding to the changes)?	
6. Were there any significant concerns or issues raised by others through the concurrence process?	
6.a. What was the nature of LMR Concurrence on this document? (Check one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concur ○ Concur with comment (FYI to unions) ○ Concur with condition (Bargaining) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Condition cleared (check after bargaining ONLY)
7. Who will be affected by the changes in the Directive/Handbook?	
8. When does the old Directive/Handbook expire?	
9. How will you notify the field of these changes? Add or attach your implementation action plan.	