

## NCA DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To update National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy and procedures for management of the official NCA directives program.

**2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES:** This directive reflects the following changes:

a. Changes the number of this directive from 6330 to 0999 to comply with VA Enterprise Directives Management (EDM) guidance in VA Directive 0999 which requires non-EDM policy documents to utilize the functional numbering system in VA Handbook 0999 to ensure consistency, traceability, and integration between EDM policy documents and Administration policy documents.

b. Updates policy to allow for issuance of NCA handbooks when warranted. The previous directive issued March 6, 2020, removed handbooks from the NCA Directives Management Program; however, in practice some handbooks have been retained and updated. This change reflects the practice of issuing handbooks when procedural guidance is extensive, and otherwise allows procedural guidance to be included as an appendix in NCA directives.

c. Revises the *Purpose* section to simplify and focus on the purpose of the directive.

d. Moves policy language found in other sections of the directive into the policy section to clarify NCA policy related to development of directives, handbooks, and notices.

e. Revises the *Responsibilities* section to clarify roles and responsibilities.

f. Revises Appendix A, Directives Management Procedures, to simplify and clarify the four-stage process for developing a new or revising an existing policy directive, handbook or notice; and to include more detailed instruction for finalizing and publishing a signed policy directive, handbook, or notice

g. Adds a new paragraph 5 to Appendix A providing guidance for archiving rescinded and superseded policy issuances.

h. Revises Appendix B, Policy Project Plan, to remove redundant instruction, simplify the format, and clarify what is required.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** National Cemetery Administration, Policy and Regulatory Service, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the material contained in this directive. Questions may be referred to the Director, Policy and Regulatory Service, or NCA42EAction@va.gov.

**4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:**

- a. VA Directive 0999 – Enterprise Directives Management (EDM), October 9, 2018.
- b. VA Handbook 0999 – Enterprise Directives Management (EDM) Procedures, August 1, 2019.

**5. RESCISSIONS:** This directive supersedes NCA Directive 6330, NCA Directives Management (March 6, 2020).

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This directive is scheduled for recertification not later than the last business day of July 2028.

/s/  
Matthew T. Quinn  
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic Only

## NCA DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

### 1. PURPOSE:

a. This directive states National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy for the publication of directives, handbooks and notices. These publications are the official means by which mandatory NCA-wide policies and procedures are issued to NCA employees.

b. This directive provides mandatory procedures for developing new or revising current policy documents (see Appendices A and B), and on formatting transmittal sheets, directives, and notices (see Appendices C, D, and E).

### 2. POLICY:

a. All official statements of NCA mandatory national policy and procedures having national scope and application will be disseminated as part of a Directives Management Program (DMP). The DMP is the official process for the development, coordination, approval, publication, and review of official policy documents.

b. The NCA Directives Management Program will be consistent with VA policy as outlined in VA Directive 0999 and may include the following types of policy documents:

(1) Directives. An NCA directive establishes policy, assigns responsibility, and may include mandatory procedures for implementing the policy. Directives will be reviewed and recertified within five years of issuance; however, they will remain in effect until superseded or rescinded. Directives are applicable to all NCA employees at all facility locations. NCA directives must be formatted and contain the content as specified in Appendix D. Additional paragraphs may be added as needed to convey the necessary information. Alternatively, procedures may be included in an appendix.

(2) Handbooks. An NCA handbook may be used to provide required procedures for implementing policy established in NCA directives when such procedures are too detailed to include as appendices in the directive and a separate official NCA publication is warranted. Handbooks will be reviewed and recertified within five years of issuance and remain in effect until superseded or rescinded. Decisions on whether to develop a new or revised NCA handbook will be determined on a case-by-case basis as part of the project planning process outlined in Appendix A.

(3) Notices. An NCA notice is used to announce an emergent policy issue, such as changes in statutory or regulatory authorities, the rescission of existing directives or other policy statements, or time-sensitive updates to mandated national policy or procedures. Notices will have a rescission date of no more than 12 months. Any substantive content contained in a notice must be incorporated in a directive within one year to remain in effect. Notices must be formatted and contain the content as specified in Appendix E.

c. NCA directives and handbooks follow the numbering system outlined in VA Handbook 0999-Directives Management Procedures.

d. NCA policy contained in manuals M40-2 and M40-3 (available on the NCA intranet) remain in effect except for those sections that have been rescinded.

e. NCA central office (NCACO) program offices, district directors, and cemetery directors should issue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to provide guidance where needed that is specific to their facilities, employees, and operations.

f. While policy letters regarding human capital management may have national scope, they will be issued by NCA's Executive Director, Human Capital Management, and are not under the purview of this directive.

g. Active NCA directives, handbooks and notices are available to NCA employees and the public on the NCA Policy Publication webpage: <https://www.cem.va.gov/policies/>. NCA directives, handbooks and notices are permanent records. Record copies of both active and rescinded NCA policy documents will be maintained in electronic format in accordance with National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) requirements.

h. This directive does not apply to NCA regulations, NCA correspondence, or other publications, such as NCA fact sheets.

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

**a. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA)** will approve and sign all NCA policy directives, handbooks, and notices, or delegate signature authority to the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

**b. Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (PDUSMA)** will:

(1) Approve fiscal year priorities for policy revision and development and ensuring those priorities are incorporated into the strategic planning process;

(2) Approve and sign policy documents when signature authority is delegated by the USMA; and,

(3) Adjudicate any NCA national policy issues that cannot otherwise be resolved by NCA upper-level leadership.

**c. Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning (DUSF&P)** will:

(1) Oversee the NCA Directives Management Program;

(2) Coordinate on all issuances and provide recommendations to the PDUSMA and USMA for keeping NCA policy accurate, effective, and efficient; and

(3) Mediate unresolved coordination issues between program offices and refer unresolved nonconcurrency to the PDUSMA as appropriate.

**d. Chief of Staff** will:

(1) Facilitate briefings as needed to obtain USMA or PDUSMA approval of policy publications; and

(2) Provide formal coordination and concurrence on policies affecting the Office of Engagement and Memorial Innovations (OEMI) and NCA's Executive Coordination and Review Service (40B1).

**e. Deputy Under Secretaries (DUS) will:**

(1) Monitor policy issues within their area of responsibility and advising the Directives Management Officer when changes necessitate revision or replacement of a policy publication within the DUS' area of responsibility;

(2) Participate in the annual policy development prioritization process to inform which policies will be put on plan for development in the fiscal year;

(3) Determine the policy or procedures to be contained in each policy publication within their area of responsibility;

(4) Designate Responsible Program Office liaison(s) within their area of responsibility to coordinate publication issues with NCA's Directives Management Officer;

(5) Review and approve policy development contributions and responses provided by subordinate staff during stakeholder review; and

(6) Review proposed policy publications from other program offices and provide concurrence or working with stakeholders to resolve issues;

**f. NCA Executive Directors and NCA Service Directors will:**

(1) Review and approve policy project plans to ensure they align with leadership intent and priorities and properly identify all relevant stakeholders; and

(2) Oversee policy development for subject matter within scope of responsibility to ensure all aspects of a policy are considered and leadership-approved policy decisions are incorporated.

**g. Responsible Program Office Liaisons (RPO Liaisons) will:**

(1) Develop policy publications for subject matter within their scope of responsibility in accordance with the process and procedures specified in this directive;

(2) Collaborate with the Policy and Regulatory Service on the following:

(A) Publishing policies in accordance with this directive;

(B) Requesting changes to published directives, handbooks, or notices in accordance with this directive;

(C) Recertifying published directives or handbooks in accordance with this directive;

(D) Rescinding directives and handbooks in accordance with this directive; and,

(E) Developing SOPs as needed, or if referenced or required by a directive, handbook, or notice, within a reasonable timeframe from the policy issue date.

**h. Stakeholders will** provide timely feedback to the Responsible Program Office during Stage 1 (Project Plan) and Stage 2 (Drafting) as described in Appendix A.

**j. Director, Policy and Regulatory Service will:**

(1) Serve as the Directives Management Officer, advising the USMA and PDUSMA on Enterprise Directives Management matters, and serving as NCA's focal point for recommendations regarding VA level directives, in accordance with VA Directive 0999;

(2) Administer the NCA Directives Management Program;

(3) Establish the technical, quality, and formatting requirements for NCA directives, handbooks, and notices;

(4) Ensure that NCA policy publications are developed in accordance with the procedures in this directive;

(5) Assist the RPO Liaisons in resolving nonconcurrences and refer unresolved issues to the DUSF&P as appropriate;

(6) Ensure final policy documents are delivered to NCA Web Services for publication on the electronic repository;

(7) Notify all NCA when a directive, handbook or notice is published; and

(8) Maintain record copies of all active and rescinded or superseded NCA directives, handbooks, and notices.

**k. Policy and Regulatory Service Analysts will :**

(1) Collaborate with RPO Liaisons and Stakeholders to ensure requirements in this directive and appendices are met in a timely manner;

(2) Coordinate necessary reviews to reconcile drafting or publication issues, reviewer feedback, or guidance from external VA offices (e.g. Office of the General Counsel, Labor Management Relations, etc.); and,

(3) Conduct accessibility checks for approved policy publications and coordinate with the RPO Liaison or other NCA or VA office as needed to ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794(d)).

**l. NCA Digital Services Specialists will:**

(1) Maintain NCA policy publications webpages for active policy publications;

(2) Process policy publishing requests from Policy and Regulatory Service to include reviewing files for compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794(d));

(3) Advise affected offices regarding any centralized Section 508 compliance services available to support the policy publication process; and

(4) Manage contracted support to ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794(d)), to include contracting officer representative (COR) responsibilities.

**m. Chief, Employee Relations and Labor Relations will:**

(1) Review proposed directives or notices to identify any impacts to the bargaining unit workforce and recommend alternatives to comply with labor agreements; and

(2) Facilitate resolution with the VA Office of Labor Management Relations concerning conflicts with directives or notices.

**5. DEFINITIONS**

a. Directive. Prescribes permanent mandatory NCA policies, outlines related procedures, and assigns associated responsibilities.

b. Handbook. Provides additional information, implementing instructions, and clarifies procedures contained in a related directive.

c. Notice. A time-limited publication used to address an emergent policy issue, such as changes in statutory or regulatory authorities, the rescission of existing directives or other policy statements, or time-sensitive updates to mandated national policy or procedures that will be incorporated in a current or future directive.

d. Policy Briefing Note. An internal NCA document providing a high-level summary of a directive or notice used to brief the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) or other senior leadership prior to final approval of the subject document. See Appendix F.

e. Recertification. The review and republication of an official NCA directive.

f. Rescission. Revocation and removal of a document as a statement of official NCA policy. Rescission is accomplished by publishing a replacement document or a notice of rescission.

g. Standard operating procedures (SOPs). Prescribes methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or in designated situations.

h. Transmittal Sheet: Required cover page for all directives and is not a stand-alone document. Transmittal sheets convey essential summary information about the publication and bear the formal approval signature for the underlying document. All NCA transmittal sheets must adhere to the format shown in Appendix C.

**DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

**1. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR NEW POLICY PUBLICATIONS.** Development of NCA directives and handbooks will follow a four-stage process as outlined below. Because NCA notices may contain time-sensitive information, they will be drafted, reviewed, and processed for concurrences and final signature in close coordination with affected offices.

**a. STAGE 1 – PROJECT PLAN (FOR DIRECTIVES AND HANDBOOKS ONLY).**

The first stage includes development of a project plan (see Appendix B) to establish the purpose and intent for the publication, identify key stakeholders, and develop a project timeline. The project plan will be signed by management of the responsible NCA program office (Director level or above) and the Director of NCA Policy and Regulatory Service (PRS) to document the decisions made and the projected schedule. Program offices will use this stage to have critical discussion with leadership and subject matter experts to consider all aspects of a policy and obtain leadership approval of policy decisions that will be incorporated into the publication. The project plan will be briefed to senior management at a policy status meeting for awareness and feedback. If there is another NCA program office that has unusually significant responsibility, that Director may also be required to sign the project plan; however, only one office may be identified as the “owner” of the directive.

**b. STAGE 2 – DRAFTING.** The second stage includes drafting the policy document with the required content, format, and structure in accordance with guidance in Appendices C and D. Responsible Program Office (RPO) Liaisons are responsible for drafting policy publications within their scope of responsibility. Because all publications must meet accessibility standards, authors will ensure proper use of tables, figures, and alternative text to minimize publication delays. RPO Liaisons will also begin drafting the supporting material required for presenting the policy publication project to the USMA or PDUSMA for final approval. This includes a policy briefing note, a briefing slide deck, a table of significant changes (for revisions) or table of significant provisions (for new policies), and other supporting documentation as needed (see Appendices F and G). PRS will provide templates and initial guidance as appropriate for the type of publication project and remain available to assist throughout the drafting process.

(1) Program Office Management Approval: RPO Liaisons will consult with their senior leadership while drafting the document and obtain documented approval of the draft from the responsible Deputy Under Secretary (DUS) or Chief of Staff (COS) (applies only to OEMI). Once the draft is approved by the DUS or COS, the RPO Liaison will send the draft to PRS for circulation to stakeholders.

(2) Stakeholder Review: PRS will circulate draft publications to all stakeholders identified in the project plan. Stakeholders will review the draft and either provide a negative reply or feedback to ensure any content related to the stakeholder’s area of responsibility or expertise is accurate and attainable. Stakeholders must provide edits or comments in tracked changes. Executive directors and service directors will review feedback or input from subordinate staff to ensure contributions are consistent with

senior leadership policy decisions and intent. PRS will coordinate review and adjudication of stakeholder feedback with the RPO Liaison.

**c. STAGE 3 – POLICY AND REGULATORY SERVICE REVIEW AND THE CONCURRENCE PROCESS.**

(1) Policy and Regulatory Service (PRS) Review: The assigned PRS Analyst will review the draft for correct formatting, duplication of information, and consistency with other policies. Analysts will also review for legal issues, including compliance with NCA statutes and regulations, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Paperwork Reduction Act (if an information collection with or without forms is indicated). Analysts will also confirm any tables and figures in the document are structured in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794(d)). Any edits will be made using tracked changes and confirmed with the program office.

(2) Formal Concurrence: PRS will create a folder in the electronic concurrence system and assign to the DUSs (41, 42, 43) and NCA COS (for OEMI). Any comments or edits must be entered into the concurrence system as tracked changes in a Word document (no PDFs). The PRS Analyst will compile all edits into a single document and confirm or reconcile changes with the RPO Liaison for their leadership's approval. If needed, the PRS will facilitate discussion between the responsible program office and any non-concurring offices. If a resolution is not reached, the issue will be elevated to the DUSF&P, and then to the PDUSMA for review and a final decision on the contested issue(s).

**d. STAGE 4 – USMA OR PDUSMA REVIEW AND APPROVAL.** The RPO Liaison will prepare the policy briefing note (see Appendix F), a briefing slide deck, a table of significant changes (if revision of an existing directive, handbook, or notice) or table of significant provisions (if a new directive) (example provided in Appendix G), and other supporting documentation, as appropriate, and provide electronically to the PRS analyst. PRS will upload all documentation to the electronic concurrence system and make an assignment to Executive Coordination and Review Service (40B1) requesting PDUSMA and COS review and their preferred date/time for a briefing. Simultaneously, PRS will make an assignment to the VA Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) for concurrence.

(1) Briefing: ECARS will provide the PRS Analyst with the date/time (or a list of available times) selected for a briefing to the PDUSMA and COS on the policy. NCA's front office staff will send invitations to the program office and PRS for the briefings. The program office leadership is responsible for presenting the briefing using a slide deck and table of significant changes/provisions. PRS will support the program office as needed. The PRS analyst will attend the briefing, take notes, document any edits/changes requested, including any edits provided by 40B1, and work with the responsible program office to make all changes requested.

(2) Approval: PRS will prepare a tracked changes version to document where the PDUSMA's or USMA's requested changes were made and to ensure version control. At

this time, the PRS analyst will confirm concurrence from LMR and incorporate any changes required. PRS will provide both the tracked changes and final version, along with any supporting documents that were updated as a result of the briefing discussions, to the Executive Coordination and Review Service (40B1) for final review and signature. USMA or PDUSMA signatory approval (either penned or electronic) must be provided on the transmittal sheet. ECARS staff will confirm the actual date of signature and provide to PRS for publication purposes. The PRS analyst will ensure the date on the document corresponds to the date it was signed, and ensure the date is accurate on all header pages of the document.

e. **PUBLICATION:** PRS will annotate the signature, using /s/ in the signature block, in the final Word document, confirm accurate dates on all header pages, then create a portable document format (PDF) version. The PRS analyst will run an accessibility check on the PDF file, remediate any issues, and confirm tagging is compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794(d)). When complete, PRS will submit the approved policy document to NCA's web services for posting. Once posted on NCA's policy internet location, PRS will send an email notification to all NCA announcing the new publication. All DUSs will make any specific notifications to staff within their responsibility as needed. PRS will maintain an electronic archive of all previous versions of all policy documents.

## 2. CHANGES TO PUBLISHED DIRECTIVES, HANDBOOKS, OR NOTICES:

a. Editorial changes are corrections to fix spelling or other minor errors. Any staff member may submit suggested changes to the RPO at any time in any format, e.g., notation on a hard copy page or an electronic message, proposing a minor revision. The responsible program office will inform PRS of the editorial change. After PRS makes the change, 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 when an editorial change is made. No editorial changes will be made during the nine months prior to the recertification date because the document will be undergoing substantive review.

b. Technical revisions are routine updates of information within directives and notices, such as program or personnel titles, phone numbers of contact persons, website addresses, or mail routing codes. Any employee may submit suggested technical revisions to the RPO at any time in any format, e.g., notation on a hard copy page or an electronic message, proposing a minor revision. The RPO will review and confirm the suggested technical revision then request the change from PRS. No change will be made to the recertification date when a technical change is made. No technical changes will be made during the nine months prior to the recertification date because the document will be undergoing substantive review.

c. Substantive revisions are revisions that change existing policy or procedure requirements or the scope of the directive or notice. Substantive changes must be submitted to the responsible program office 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.) to explain or justify the proposed change(s). If the RPO determines that substantive changes are warranted, they will work with PRS to make the changes and update the transmittal sheet. PRS will work with the RPO to obtain the necessary reviews, concurrences, and final signature and will publish the policy with new effective date. If substantive changes are required to an NCA notice, the notice will be rescinded and replaced in whole.

### **3. RECERTIFICATION OF PUBLISHED DIRECTIVES AND HANDBOOKS**

a. Recertification is required every five (5) years for directives and handbooks. The Transmittal Sheet of each directive will include the date by which the document must be recertified. PRS will notify the RPO in writing (electronic mail acceptable) nine 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.

b. The RPO will review and update content, cite references, and changes in operating procedures. PRS will assist in identifying new statutes, regulations, or other guidance issued by NCA, VA, or other oversight authority relevant to the policy under review.

c. The RPO must reply indicating one of the following options for the subject directive or handbook:

(1) Republish (recertify) with no changes;

(2) Republish with changes. If the document requires revisions for any reason (including revising a handbook into a directive), the RPO will complete a project plan, and follow the process set forth in this document to revise the document; or,

(3) Officially rescind. For any document proposed for rescission, the RPO must account for any existing policy or procedures by identifying whether such policy or procedures are no longer needed or followed or have been incorporated into a different document. This information must be included in the rescission notice.

### **4. RESCISSION**

a. NCA directives and handbooks remain in effect until they are replaced by an updated version of the document or are directly rescinded by a Notice of Rescission. Rescission makes a document obsolete through replacement of new guidance or when considered no longer in effect. A document must be rescinded if the information contained in it is no longer valid or 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. For any document proposed for rescission, the RPO must account for any existing policy or procedures by

identifying whether such policy or procedures are no longer needed or followed or have been incorporated into a different document. This information must be included in the rescission notice.

## 5. ARCHIVING

a. PRS will retain electronic record copies of all NCA policy publications signed by the USMA or the PDUSMA. Each policy publication will be maintained in a folder designated by policy number with all historical final versions filed by year published in subordinate files within the policy folder. Each archive folder should include the following:

(1) Final signed version in MS Word with file name indicating policy number, status (final, signed), and the signature date. For example: NCA Dir 0999\_Final\_Signed\_06-30-2022.

(2) PDF copy of signed transmittal sheet with file name indicating policy number, status (transmittal, signed), and the signature date. For example: NCA Dir 0999\_transmittal\_signed\_06-30-2022.

(3) PDF published version with file name indicating policy number, status (final, published), and signature date. For example: NCA Dir 0999\_final\_published\_06-30-2022.

b. Archived copies of superseded or rescinded policy publications will be marked as follows by the PRS analyst to ensure it is clear they are no longer in effect:

(1) Add a watermark to final version pdf files that contain superseded or rescinded policy publications and annotate the status in the filename. For example: NCA Dir 0999\_Final\_Signed\_02-15-2015\_Superseded\_06-30-2022. Watermark should be on every page and include a statement such as: Superseded on 06-30-2022 by NCA Directive 6330, Retained for Record.

(2) Add a watermark to final version word files that contain superseded or rescinded policy publications and annotate the status in the filename. For example: NCA Dir 0999\_Final\_Signed\_02-15-2015\_Superseded\_06-30-2022. Watermark should be on every page and include a statement such as: Superseded on 06-30-2022 by NCA Directive 0999, Retained for Reference; or Rescinded on 06-30-2022 by NCA Notice 2022-xx.

c. Current policy publications will be publicly available on the NCA internet webpage. Superseded policy publications under the purview of this directive (signed by the USMA or PDUSMA) will be retained on NCA's shared network drive with limited access. NCA staff who need to reference a superseded or rescinded policy publication should contact PRS.

**POLICY PROJECT PLAN**

Project	42E POC	Program Office POC	Target completion date
<i>Project identifier or name</i>			<i>Last day of the fiscal year</i>

**1. Purpose/Need for New or Revised Policy:** Explain in sufficient detail (narrative or bullets) the rationale for a new or revised policy which may include as applicable: changes to statutory or regulatory authorities with citations, updated procedures, office titles, organizational changes, implementation of VA or NCA strategic goals or projects, etc.

**2. Stakeholders:** Identify the NCA program offices that are affected by the contents of the policy document or otherwise have equity in the content. PRS will include them during stakeholder review.

**3. Reference Document Inventory:** Provide citations to any existing VA or NCA policy document or guidance that is related to this policy content and will be included as a reference. Include the document type (VA or NCA directive, handbook, notice, memo, etc.); identifying information (number, title, dates, etc); a brief description and location (VA or NCA policy publication, VA Intranet, etc.); and the anticipated disposition of existing reference (rescission, revision, inclusion as reference).

**4. Objectives/Strategic Goals:** List pertinent objectives of the issuance and identify the corresponding NCA strategic goals furthered by the proposed policy. NCA’s Long Range Plan objective 5.2 and strategy 5.2.1 are applicable to all policy publications.

	Project Objective	NCA Strategic Goal
1	Provide clear policy and guidance for all stakeholders.	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. 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
2	[Enter PO identified strategic objective]	[Enter PO identified strategic goal]

**5. Work Breakdown Structure**

Step(s)	Start Date	Completion Date
<b>Stage 1—Project Plan</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> PRS will kick off policy discussion w/ RPO <input type="checkbox"/> RPO will finalize the project plan and obtain approval signatures <input type="checkbox"/> RPO/PRS will coordinate initial management briefing		
<b>Stage 2—Drafting and Stakeholder Review (90 calendar days)</b>		

<p>RPO will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> draft content, following 0999 format guidance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> send DUS-approved draft to PRS for stakeholder review</li> </ul> <p>PRS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> distribute draft for stakeholder review (including PRS as a stakeholder)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> compile all stakeholder feedback into one document</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> send to RPO to adjudicate comments and proposed changes</li> </ul> <p>RPO will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> address all comments and accept/reject any proposed track changes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> send DUS-approved adjudication to PRS</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Stage 3—PRS Review and Formal DUS Concurrence (30 calendar days)</b></p>		
<p>PRS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> review adjudicated draft (formatting, legal issues (APA, PRA), consistency, etc)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> submit for final DUS/SES concurrence in VIEWS</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assign LMR concurrence task in VIEWS</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> resolve any comments or non-concurrence with RPO and DUS</li> </ul>		<p><b>9/30/xxxx</b></p>
<p><b>Stage 4—USMA Review and Approval</b></p>		
<p>RPO will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare policy briefing note, summary of changes, and slide deck and provide all to PRS</li> </ul> <p>PRS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assist as needed and review RPO briefing materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> coordinate with NCA Front Office to schedule a briefing with PDUSMA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assign tasks in VIEWS for USMA and Executive Correspondence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> track PDUSMA/USMA edits and coordinate w/ RPO to finalize</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> coordinate w/ NCA Front Office to finalize signature</li> </ul>		

**6. Project Approval Signatures:** The project plan must be signed by management of the responsible NCA program office (Director level or above) and the Director of NCA Policy and Regulatory Service (PRS).

**SAMPLE TRANSMITTAL SHEET FORMAT**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration  
Washington, DC 20420

NCA DIRECTIVE (or HANDBOOK XXXX  
Transmittal Sheet  
{Issue Date}

**DIRECTIVE (or 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 as appropriate, i.e., if a new directive, the title of this paragraph would be SUMMARY OF CONTENTS; if a revised directive, the title would be SUMMARY OF CHANGES. Briefly summarize document content or changes; use designated subparagraphs to list specific changes as shown below:

a. Policy regarding formatting of directives is revised to conform to new guidance issued by NCA’s Directives Management Officer; and

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

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** *Required entry.* National Cemetery Administration, Office of \_\_\_\_\_, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this directive. Questions may be referred to *{insert position title or office name, do not use names of individuals}*.

**4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:** List any VA or NCA documents related to this directive or enter “None.”

**5. RESCISSIONS:** List any previous NCA documents or guidance replaced by this new directive or enter “None.”

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** Use to indicate when review/update of the document is necessary. NCA policy requires review and action on directives 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

**SAMPLE DIRECTIVE FORMAT**

(Note: Handbook format will be similar but will have slightly different content requirements. PRS will provide format template as needed.)

{Issue Date}

NCA Directive XXXX

**DIRECTIVE TITLE GOES HERE**

**1. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY:** *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 \_\_\_\_\_”; and

b. 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:** *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:** *Required entry.* Briefly state NCA policy on the subject matter addressed in the directive. Do not include procedures in this section.

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES:** *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. Do not list individuals merely because of their role in the organization, for example, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs is always responsible for overall administration of NCA cemeteries and programs, so that function need not be repeated in every directive.

**5. PROCEDURES:** *Optional entry.* Procedures should be included in a directive if they are MANDATORY and NATIONALLY APPLICABLE. If procedures are lengthy, they may be included in an appendix instead of here.

**6. 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.

**7. DEFINITIONS:** *Optional entry.* Define terms (only if used in the directive) that readers may not know; definitions should be consistent with descriptions in other NCA documents or as defined by higher level authorities.

**8. APPENDIX:** *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.).

**SAMPLE NOTICE FORMAT**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration  
Washington, DC 20420

NCA NOTICE YEAR-##  
{Issue Date}

**NOTICE TITLE GOES HERE**

**1. PURPOSE/REASON FOR ISSUE:** *Required entry.* Explain the information that is being provided or announced and why. Reasons for publishing notices include:

- a. Providing important information involving or of interest to NCA staff, such as new public laws;
- b. Announcing new time-sensitive policy and/or procedures that will be incorporated in future directives; or
- c. Reminding NCA staff of existing policy and/or procedures.

**2. BACKGROUND:** *Optional entry* and should be kept brief. If the notice was triggered by a particular event, such as enactment of a new or revised statute or regulation, that should be stated here.

**3. CHANGE TO POLICY/PROCEDURES [or other heading that fits the content, e.g., RESTATEMENT OF POLICY or SUMMARY OF PUBLIC LAW]:** *Required entry.* Describe the new or revised policy and/or procedures, or other information being conveyed. State whether the information will be incorporated into an existing directive (the specific number and title should be cited) or a new directive will be created. **NOTE:** *Because notices are time-limited, any content imparting policy or procedures must be incorporated into a directive before the expiration date in paragraph 6 for such content to remain effective.*

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** *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:** *Required entry.* State whether an existing publication is rescinded (in full or in part).

**6. EXPIRATION:** *Required entry.* Notices may remain in effect for up to one year. All notices will be archived one year on their expiration date.

*Name of Official  
Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs*

Distribution: Electronic

NCA POLICY BRIEFING NOTE

Title of Issuance:

Views Case #:

Program Office POC:

Phone:

42E POC:

Phone:

---

1. Is this an NCA or VA issuance?
2. Why is this issuance being published (i.e. cite new legislation; changes in regulations, procedures or policy decisions; etc.)?
3. If this is a notice, state the date of rescission you need and justification for the time the notice will be in place.
4. If this is a directive, is it new or is this an update to an existing directive? If this is an update, when does the previous version expire?
5. If this is an update, what are the changes from the previously issued document?
6. Please list the concurrences with dates, and summarize any significant concerns or issues raised by other during the concurrence process.
  - DUS Field Programs & Cem Ops (41) \_\_\_\_\_
  - DUS Finance and Planning (42) \_\_\_\_\_
  - DUS Management (43) \_\_\_\_\_
  - NCA COS (for 44 or 40A2 (select one)) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the status of LMR Concurrence? If pending, briefing may continue but hold document for signature until LMR concurs.
  - Pending
  - Concur
  - Concur with comment (FYI to unions)
  - Concur with condition (Bargaining)
    - Condition cleared (check after bargaining ONLY)
8. Who will be affected by the changes in this issuance?
9. How will the responsible program office notify the field of these changes? Add or attach implementation plan.

**EXAMPLE OF SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES**

*(This example is based on changes made to this directive (NCA Directive 6330) in 2019. This chart may be formatted in portrait or landscape orientation as needed)*

<b>PRIOR VERSION</b> NCA Directive 6330 (August 30, 2016)	<b>NEW (REVISED) VERSION</b> NCA Directive 6330 (2019)	<b>Revised Page # or Location</b>
<b>ADDED PROCEDURES PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN HANDBOOK XXXX</b>		
Not in prior version	Because NCA leadership had decided to combine directives and handbooks into a single document, the procedural requirements for this program previously contained in Handbook 6330.01 have been incorporated into Directive 6330	Appendices; miscellaneous provisions
<b>REVISED RESPONSIBILITIES</b>		
USMA was responsible for signing all directives	Added provision allowing USMA to delegate signature to PDUSMA	2
Not in prior version	Added provision that PDUSMA may sign when USMA delegates	2
Not in prior version	Added provision that PDUSMA will decide how to reconcile disagreements among program offices; Directives Management Officer will present cases of disagreement to PDUSMA	2; 3
Not in prior version	Added responsibility for DUSs to define process for their staff to obtain the DUS's views so that policy development and reviews of other offices' policies reflect the DUS views	2
Offices could work out differences regarding policies in concurrence before concurring	Clarified that offices either concur or non-concur on a policy in the concurrence system. Discussion of the reasons for nonconcurrence will be facilitated among offices by the Directives Management Officer.	2,3
Not in prior version	DUSs must prepare materials used in briefings to PDUSMA/USMA	3
<b>OTHER MISCELLANEOUS CHANGES</b>		
Notices were archived after six months, unless renewed for an additional six months	Notices will remain in effect for one year and will be expire on the designated date. Any substantive content contained in a notice must be published in a directive within one year to remain in effect.	1
Not in prior version	Added language indicating that more than one program office may sign a project plan if the office has significant responsibilities within the directive.	
Not in prior version of directive (were in handbook)	Appendices added to define directives process and provide examples for guidance	Appendices
Not in prior version	Procedures are added for in person briefings to PDUSMA/USMA	A-4
Not in prior version	Added an example of a "Summary of Significant Changes" table for briefings	Appendix G
Prior version contained procedures regarding LMR concurrence	Removed LMR concurrence information. This step is handled by the Policy and Regulatory Service. Program offices need only know that LMR concurrence is required but not the detailed steps on how it will be handled. <b>LMR concurrence is still required PRIOR TO a directive being signed.</b>	N/A