

§ 26.5

policies set forth in the NEPA and CEQ Regulations;

(2) Prepare concise and clear environmental documents which shall be supported by documented environmental analyses;

(3) Integrate the requirements of NEPA with Department planning and decision-making procedures;

(4) Encourage and facilitate involvement by affected agencies, organizations, interest groups and the public in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment; and,

(5) Consider alternatives to the proposed actions which are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in relevant environmental documents, and described in the environmental impact statement.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370a)

[51 FR 37182, Oct. 20, 1986, as amended at 54 FR 34987, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 26.5 Responsibilities.

(a) The Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs shall:

(1) Be responsible to coordinate and provide guidance to VA elements on all environmental matters;

(2) Assist in the preparation of environmental documents by VA elements; and, where more than one VA element, or Federal, State, or local agency is involved, assign the lead VA element or propose the lead Federal, State or local agency to prepare the environmental documents;

(3) Recommend appropriate actions to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on those environmental matters for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has final approval authority;

(4) Assist in resolution of disputes concerning environmental matters within VA, and among VA and other Federal, State and local agencies;

(5) Coordinate preparation of VA comments on draft and final environmental impact statements of other agencies;

(6) Serve as the VA's principal liaison to the CEQ, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, and other Federal, State, and local agencies on VA environmental actions; and

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(7) Prepare appropriate supplemental guidance on implementation of these regulations.

(b) VA General Counsel shall provide legal advice and assistance in meeting the requirement of NEPA, the CEQ Regulations and these regulations.

(c) The heads of each VA element shall:

(1) Adopt procedures to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with NEPA, the CEQ Regulations and these regulations; and

(2) Be responsible to prepare environmental documents relating to programs and proposed actions by their elements, when required by these regulations.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370a)

§ 26.6 Environmental documents.

(a) *Environmental Impact Statements.* The head of each VA element shall include a detailed written statement "in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environmental." NEPA 102(2), 42 U.S.C. 4332(2) *see* CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR part 1502. An environmental impact statement shall be prepared in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) *Typical Classes of Action Which Normally Do Require Environmental Impact Statements:* (i) Proposed legislation (CEQ Regulation, 40 CFR 1508.17);

(ii) Acquisition of land in excess of 10 acres for development of a VA medical center facility;

(iii) Acquisition of land in excess of 50 acres for development of a VA national cemetery; and

(iv) Promulgation of policies which substantially alter agency programs and which have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

(2) *Specific Criteria for Typical Classes of Action Which Normally Do Require Environmental Impact Statements:* (i) Probable significant degradation of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, designated wetlands or ecologically critical areas;

(ii) An increase in average daily vehicle traffic volume of at least 20 percent on access roads to the site or the major roadway network;