

## United States Postal Service

## § 775.6

*Responsible official* means the person, or designated representative, who proposes an action and is responsible for compliance with NEPA. For larger projects, that person may not have the financial authority to approve such action. The responsible official signs the NEPA documents (FONSI, ROD) and the REC.

[63 FR 45719, Aug. 27, 1998]

### § 775.5 Classes of actions.

(a) *Actions which normally require an environment impact statement.* None, however the Postal Service will prepare an EIS when necessary based on the factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27.

(b) *Actions requiring an environmental assessment.* Classes of actions that will require an environmental assessment unless categorically excluded include:

(1) Any project that includes the conversion, purchase, or any other alteration of the fuel source for 25 percent or more of USPS vehicles operating with fuel other than diesel or gasoline in any carbon monoxide or ozone non-attainment area;

(2) Any action that would adversely affect a federally listed threatened or endangered species or its habitat;

(3) Any action that would directly affect public health;

(4) Any action that would require development within park lands, or be located in close proximity to a wild or scenic river or other ecologically critical area;

(5) Any action affecting the quality of the physical environment that would be scientifically highly controversial;

(6) Any action that may have highly uncertain or unknown risks on the human environment;

(7) Any action that threatens a violation of applicable federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment;

(8) New construction of a facility with vehicle maintenance or fuel dispensing capabilities, whether owned or leased;

(9) Acquisition or lease of an existing building involving new uses or a change in use to a greater environmental intensity;

(10) Real property disposal involving a known change in use to a greater environmental intensity;

(11) Postal facility function changes involving new uses of greater environmental intensity;

(12) Reduction in force involving more than 1000 positions;

(13) Relocation of 300 or more employees more than 50 miles;

(14) Initiation of legislation.

[63 FR 45719, Aug. 27, 1998]

### § 775.6 Categorical exclusions.

(a) The classes of actions in this section are those that the Postal Service has determined do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the human environment. To be categorically excluded, it must be determined that a proposed action fits within a class listed and there are no extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the proposal. The action must not be connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts or is not related to other proposed actions with potentially significant impacts. Extraordinary circumstances are those unique situations presented by specific proposals, such as scientific controversy about the environmental impacts of the proposal, uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks.

(b) Categorical exclusions relating to general agency actions:

(1) Policy development, planning and implementation that relate to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes or similar administrative functions.

(2) Routine actions, including the management of programs or activities necessary to support the normal conduct of agency business, such as administrative, financial, operational and personnel action that involve no commitment of resources other than manpower and funding allocations.

(3) Award of contracts for technical support services, management and operation of a government owned facility, and personal services.

(4) Research activities and studies and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity.

(5) Educational and informational programs and activities.

(6) Reduction in force resulting from workload adjustments, reduced personnel or funding levels, skill imbalances or other similar causes that do not affect more than 1,000 positions.

(7) Postal rate or mail classification actions, address information system changes, post office name and zip code changes.

(8) Property protection, law enforcement and other legal activities undertaken by the Postal Inspection Service, the Law Department, the Judicial Officer, and the Inspector General.

(9) Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad.

(10) Emergency preparedness planning activities, including designation of on-site evacuation routes.

(11) Minor reassignment of motor vehicles and purchase or deployment of motor vehicles to new locations that do not adversely impact traffic safety, congestion or air quality.

(12) Procurement or disposal of mail handling or transport equipment.

(13) Acquisition, installation, operation, removal or disposal of communication systems, computers and data processing equipment.

(14) Postal facility function changes not involving construction, where there are no substantial relocation of employees, or no substantial increase in the number of motor vehicles at a facility.

(15) Closure or consolidation of post offices under 39 U.S.C. 404(d).

(16) Minor operational changes at an existing facility to minimize waste generation and for reuse of materials. These changes include but are not limited to, adding filtration and recycling systems to allow reuse of vehicle or machine oil, setting up sorting areas to improve process efficiency, and segregating waste streams previously mingled and assigning new identification codes to the two resulting streams.

(17) Actions which have an insignificant effect upon the environment as established in a previously written Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Such repetitive actions shall be considered “reference actions” and a record of all decisions concerning these

“reference actions” shall be maintained by the Chief Environmental Officer or designee. The proposed action must be essentially the same in context and the same or less in intensity or create fewer impacts than the “reference action” previously studied under an EA or EIS in order to qualify for this exclusion.

(18) Rulemakings that are strictly procedural, and interpretations and rulings with existing regulations, or modifications or rescissions of such interpretations and rulings.

(c) Categorical exclusions relating to emergency or restoration actions:

(1) Any cleanup, remediation or removal action conducted under the provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), any asbestos abatement actions regulated under the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), or the Clean Air Act or any PCB transformer replacement or any lead based paint abatement actions regulated under the provisions of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), OSHA or RCRA.

(2) Testing associated with environmental cleanups or site investigations.

(d) Categorical exclusions relating to maintenance or repair actions at existing facilities:

(1) Siting, construction or operation of temporary support buildings or support structures.

(2) Routine maintenance and minor activities, such as fencing, that occur in floodplains or state and local wetlands or pursuant to the nationwide, regional or general permitting process of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

(3) Routine actions normally conducted to protect and maintain properties and which do not alter the configuration of the building.

(4) Changes in configuration of buildings required to promote handicapped accessibility pursuant to the Architectural Barriers Act.

(5) Repair to, or replacement in kind or equivalent of building equipment or components (e.g., electrical distribution, HVAC systems, doors, windows, roofs, etc.).

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(6) Internal modifications or improvements to structure, or buildings to accommodate mail processing, computer, communication or other similar types of equipment or other actions which do not involve modification to the external walls of the facility.

(7) Joint development and/or joint use projects that only involve internal modifications to an existing facility.

(8) Noise abatement measures, such as construction of noise barriers and installation of noise control materials.

(9) Actions which require concurrence or approval of another federal agency where the action is a categorical exclusion under the NEPA regulations of that federal agency.

(e) Categorical exclusions relating to real estate actions.

(1) Obtaining, granting, disposing, or changing of easements, licenses and permits, rights-of-way and similar interests.

(2) Extension, renewal, renegotiation, or termination of existing lease agreements.

(3) Purchase of Postal Service occupied leased property where the planned postal uses do not differ significantly from the past uses of the site.

(4) Acquisition or disposal of existing facilities and real property where the planned uses do not differ significantly from past uses of the site.

(5) Acquisition of real property not connected to specific facility plans or when necessary to protect the interests of the Postal Service in advance of final project approval. This categorical exclusion only applies to the acquisition. Any subsequent use of the site for a facility project must be considered under this part.

(6) Disposal through sale or outlease of unimproved real property.

(7) Disposal through sale, outlease, transfer or exchange of real property to other federal or state agencies.

(8) Acquisition and disposal through sale, lease, transfer or exchange of real property that does not involve an increase in volumes, concentrations, or discharge rates of wastes, air emissions, or water effluents, and that under reasonably foreseeable uses, have generally similar environmental impacts as compared to those before the acquisition or disposal. A determina-

tion that the proposed action is categorically excluded can be based upon previous "reference actions" documented under § 775.6(b)(17).

(9) Acquisition and disposal through sale, lease, transfer, reservation or exchange of real property for nature and habitat preservation, conservation, a park or wildlife management.

(10) New construction, Postal Service owned or leased, or joint development and joint use projects, of any facility unless the proposed action is listed as requiring an EA in § 775.5.

(11) Expansion or improvement of an existing facility where the expansion is within the boundaries of the site or occurs in a previously developed area unless the proposed action is listed as requiring an EA in § 775.5.

(12) Construction and disturbance pursuant to a nationwide, regional or general permit issued by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

(13) Any activity in floodplains being regulated pursuant to § 775.6 and is not listed as requiring an EA in § 775.5.

[63 FR 45720, Aug. 27, 1998, as amended at 76 FR 53057, Aug. 25, 2011]

### § 775.7 Planning and early coordination.

Early planning and coordination among postal functional groups is required to properly consider environmental issues that may be attributable to the proposed action. Operational and facility personnel must cooperate in the early concept stages of a program or project. If it is determined that more than one postal organization will be involved in any action, a lead organization will be selected to complete the NEPA process before any NEPA documents are prepared. If it is determined that a project has both real estate and non-real estate actions, the facilities functional organization will take the lead.

[63 FR 45721, Aug. 27, 1998]

### § 775.8 Environmental evaluation guidelines.

(a) *Approach.* When dealing with proposals which may have an impact on the human environment, environmental coordinators, planners, decision