

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLAIN LANGUAGE ACTION PLAN

Communicating the President's Expectations to Employees

- Send Secretarial memorandum to Secretarial Officers and Heads of Operating Administrations advising them of:
 - The President's directive and the Vice President's guidance
 - The Department of Transportation's (DOT's) senior official responsible for implementation of the President's directive and the regulatory and non-regulatory document contacts
 - DOT's Plain Language Action Plan
 - The application of the Plan to all DOT documents
 - The need to notify all employees of their responsibilities
 - The need to identify operating administration contacts to represent the agencies on DOT's plain language committee
 - The need to prepare action plans within each operating administration to implement the President's directive
 - The importance of a strong commitment from them
- Create a plain language intranet site for use by DOT employees; place the following documents on the site:
 - The President's directive
 - The Vice President's guidance
 - The Secretary's memorandum
 - DOT's Plain Language Action Plan
- Have regular meetings/conference calls with those responsible for implementing the initiative to ensure they understand their responsibilities and that they are taking appropriate steps

Equipping Staff With Needed Tools

- Conduct plain language training
- Provide plain language resource material, including guidance and the names of trainers
- Create hypertext links on DOT's intranet site to plain language resources
- As appropriate, develop or change existing DOT writing guidance
- Develop processes for obtaining customer feedback on generic as well as document specific problems
- Develop good DOT examples of "before" and "after" documents to illustrate how to write in plain language and to demonstrate its advantages
- Work with the Federal Register, as necessary, to develop improved methods

for presenting information

Meeting the Deadlines in the Memo

- Identify non rulemaking documents that need to be written in plain language beginning in October 1998
- Ask responsible offices to identify by January 1, 1999, non-rulemaking documents written before October 1998 that need to be rewritten before January 1, 2002
- By January 1, 1999, use plain language in all rulemaking documents
- In October 1998 Regulatory Agenda, provide schedule for reviewing existing rules to determine which need to be rewritten in plain language; ask for public comment concerning existing and proposed rules that need to be rewritten in this and subsequent agendas
- Immediately begin using a variety of methods for obtaining customer feedback on whether we have achieved our plain language objectives in our documents; this could include raising the issue at meetings with regulated entities or seeking comment on a specific documents

Sustaining Change Over the Long Term

- Ensure strong commitment from DOT leadership, including asking them to satisfy themselves that their agency's documents are well-written
- Add language to DOT's Strategic Plan and appropriate individual performance agreements to reflect the need to implement plain language
- Require the senior DOT official responsible for implementing plain language to meet on a regular basis with DOT-wide contacts to review DOT's implementation and ensure necessary follow up; the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary will also be briefed periodically on compliance
- Make plain language a part of the review process for regulatory and non-regulatory documents
- Periodically review with enforcement/compliance, regulatory and other personnel various indicators of success or failure, such as requests for interpretation, public comment on rulemakings or other documents, compliance and enforcement activities, and general customer feedback; determine whether they indicate problems or success and implement appropriate changes