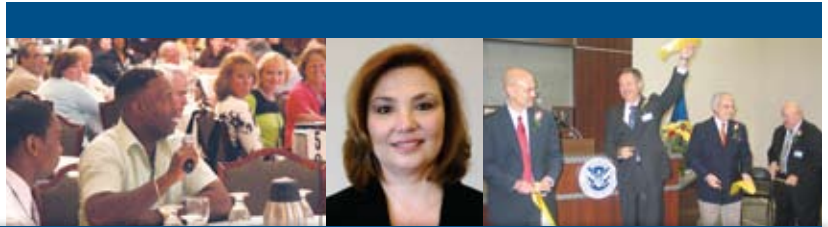


Mid-Atlantic FOCUS



A Newsletter for Customers of the GSA Public Buildings Service

Summer 2008

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Helping customers further their missions
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Focus on the Web at: www.gsa.gov/midatlanticfocus

Space Alterations Complete in Baltimore's Fallon Federal Building

On May 8, 2008, GSA Regional Administrator Barbara L. Shelton hosted a ceremony with federal tenants of the George H. Fallon Federal Building in Baltimore, MD, to celebrate the completion of building modernizations and Art-in-Architecture installations at the facility. Over 100 attendees gathered to hear remarks from Shelton; Kristen Soper, Assistant to Senator Barbara A. Mikulski; artists Jean Shin and Alice Aycock; John H. Cole, Jr., Director of Veterans Benefits Academy; and Rob Hewell, GSA Assistant Regional Administrator for PBS.

In a short video, GSA highlighted two art installations at the facility along with newly renovated areas of the building including the cafeteria, child-care center, fitness center, multipurpose rooms, and lobby. Started in 2005, the renovation project targeted the lower floors—or base—of the building. GSA modernized the basement, ground, and 1st through 3rd floors affecting approximately 225,000 gross square feet. The project was performed through a concerted effort to minimize disruptions to all agencies working in the building.

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Ceremony speakers: Barbara L. Shelton, GSA Regional Administrator; Kristen Soper, Assistant to Senator Barbara A. Mikulski; John H. Cole, Jr. Director of Veterans Benefits Academy; Alice Aycock, artist; Jean Shin, artist; and Rob Hewell, GSA Assistant Regional Administrator for PBS.

From the Desk of the



ARA

GSA's ability to efficiently and effectively deliver services to our federal partners is greatly enhanced through open communication and a mutual understanding of agency mission and business processes. Mid-Atlantic PBS is committed to maintaining an open dialogue. In this edition of *Focus*, you'll read about our 2008 Customer Leasing Workshop, held June 3-4 in Philadelphia. The workshop was designed to offer our customers a better understanding of the GSA leasing process and strategies for ensuring a successful lease. It was great to see so many of you there and to hear your valuable feedback.

We've been working hard to improve our work processes. In 2006, a survey of ordering officials within our customer agencies told us there was a great need to improve our Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) process. In this edition, you'll read some important information about the submission and closeout of RWAs, and learn about a new "Introduction to Reimbursable Services" video, available online and customized specifically for individuals who authorize or manage RWAs with GSA on behalf of their agency. The 30-minute training explains the basics of RWAs, applicable laws, and walks you through the RWA lifecycle from submission to closeout.

We make it our priority to understand the mission and goals of our customers so that we can deliver workplace solutions that meet your objectives and further your mission. In this edition, you'll read an example of this as we highlight the opening of a new Federal Emergency Management Agency facility in Winchester, Virginia. Open communication, mutual understanding, and astute project management were keys to this project's success.

As we move forward, we will continue to stress the importance of open communication and strive for mutual understanding in our federal agency partnerships. [▶](#)



Rob Hewell
Assistant Regional Administrator
Public Buildings Service
Mid-Atlantic Region

Thanks for the Feedback

GSA would like to thank those of you who took time out of your busy schedules to respond to our 2008 Public Buildings Service Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

GSA is committed to providing federal agencies with the best service possible. The feedback received through this survey will help us improve future service to our federal clients. [F](#)

continued from front cover

Space Alterations Complete in Baltimore's Fallon Federal Building


John H. Cole, Jr. highlighted the positive impact the modernization has had on his agency and the building population. "We're pleased with our new spaces, facilities, and equipment. We have had great working relationships with GSA and the contractors in making this come together in a period of about four years." He also noted, "Morale is high!"

As part of this project, artist Jean Shin was commissioned for an art installation, *Dress Code*, featured in the facility's main lobby. Shin partnered with building tenants, including the Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, to collect clothing and garments from veterans and recent immigrants in the communities these agencies represent. The

mosaic-like compositions of flat, recycled fabrics portray the diversity of individuals who make up the military and immigrant communities. Shin's artwork, along with Alice Aycock's abstract

steel tubular sculpture, *Swing Over*, installed on the exterior of the main entrance, demonstrate GSA's commitment to the arts through its Art-in-Architecture program.

"All of us on the Federal Executive Board (FEB) represent many agencies of the Fallon Federal Building, and we are very pleased with the results

of the renovations to this building," said Richard Howell, Executive Director of the FEB in Baltimore. "We are very happy and look forward to continuing great relationships with the General Services Administration." 

"We're pleased with our new spaces, facilities, and equipment. We have had great working relationships with GSA and the contractors in making this come together in a period of about four years."

— *John H. Cole, Jr.*
Director of Veterans Benefits Academy



Dress Code by Jean Shin installed in first floor lobby in April 2008.



Swing Over by Alice Aycock, installed outside the main entrance in 2004, received new exterior lighting during this modernization project.



New cafeteria installed on the ground floor. Photo courtesy of Alan Gilbert Photography.

Customer Leasing Workshop Held in Philadelphia

The PBS Mid-Atlantic Region hosted the 2008 PBS Customer Leasing Workshop, *Strategies for Success*, on June 3-4 at The Union League in downtown Philadelphia, PA. Over 115 customers joined GSA to gain a better understanding of the GSA leasing process and strategies for ensuring a successful lease.

With nearly half of all federal employees now working in leased space, GSA relies heavily on its leasing program to house the federal government. The workshop was held to facilitate successful leases that help GSA customer agencies accomplish their missions.

Following opening remarks by Barbara L. Shelton, GSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator, and Rob Hewell, PBS Mid-Atlantic Assistant Regional Administrator, GSA provided an overview of the leasing process. Presenters guided the audience through the process step-by-step, and highlighted critical elements along the path to space occupancy including surveying the market, the Solicitation for Offers, lessons learned in workplace design, substantial completion, space acceptance, occupancy, and lease administration. Other presentation topics included a who's who in PBS Mid-Atlantic,

the lease prospectus process, Interagency Security Committee Standards and their impact on leasing, Reimbursable Work Authorizations, and disaster preparedness.

In addition to the presentations, GSA program experts sponsored information tables where they provided information and discussed a variety of topics including environmental

planning, sustainable design, workplace accessibility, workplace design, green building occupancy, and new space occupancy planning services available through the GSA Federal Acquisition Service.


“Excellent information exchange”

— Jo Vallone

Facilities Management

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

All attendees surveyed said they would attend a similar event if held again in the future. “The presentations were very informative,” commented Phyllis Patricco, Administrative Officer with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. “The information presented proved very beneficial to me in effectively doing my job.”

We invite you to visit www.gsa.gov/r3leasingworkshop to view the Workshop presentations. Thank you to all those who attended and participated in making the 2008 PBS Customer Leasing Workshop a success. 



Workshop attendee Mark Sherman, Space and Facilities Specialist for the U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, shares his thoughts with GSA.

“Outstanding information
and networking
opportunity”

— *Mark Sherman*
Space and Facilities Specialist,
U.S. District Court for the
District of New Jersey



GSA Realty Manager Julie Hepp discusses the Solicitation for Offers with Workshop attendees.

“A very useful session”

— *Bruce Blackistone*
Space Management Program Manager National Park Service

“Well done!”

— *Kathryn Brantley*
Director, Administrative
Service Center
U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban
Development



Ray Madsen and Larry Gordon, U.S. Department of the Interior, discuss Green Building Occupancy with GSA's Susan Guard.

Veterans Affairs Embarks on Expansion Plan to Assist Returning Veterans

In the summer of 2007, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) embarked on an aggressive hiring initiative to address the growing number of claims requests, resulting from the increasing number of veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The VA developed a plan to hire 3,700 new claims processors nationwide to meet the agency's pressing needs.

Since all of these new employees require work space, GSA was a ready partner with the VA to meet their needs. Over the past year, Mid-Atlantic PBS began several space renovation and expansion projects designed to improve space utilization, as well as added close to 30,000 square feet to house new VA hires in four existing VA locations.

PBS has finished renovations to an existing 8,800 square feet leased facility in Huntington, West Virginia. Completed in March 2008, the space provides 70 new workspaces and accommodates over 50 recently hired VA employees. Upgrades are also being made to the existing IT training room.


GSA's Baltimore Field Office has worked to accommodate 55 new claims processors through renovations of over 7,700 square feet on the 12th floor of the George H. Fallon Federal Building in Maryland. The Field Office was able to execute this project to utilize existing and swing space, allowing the VA to move in new employees incrementally since January 2008. This project is

linked to two other VA projects in the building including another renovation, and an expansion into 3,800 vacant square feet on the Federal Building's 3rd floor.

Newly renovated space at the VA Regional Office and Insurance Center at 5000 Wissahickon Avenue in Philadelphia will accommodate 275 new hires in 8,000 square feet of space currently used for file storage. These files will in turn be relocated into condensed shelving units elsewhere in the building. The renovation of 4,200 square feet for 20 new claims processors in the Richard H. Poff Federal Building in Roanoke, Virginia will also be complete later this summer.

GSA has worked diligently to meet the VA's aggressive project timeframe. VA officials are pleased with the commitment GSA has put into its efforts to provide local space for the new hires.

"VA is providing the benefits and services that the young men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have earned with their service and sacrifice," said Leo Phelan, Director of Facilities, Access and Administration for the Veterans Benefits Administration. "The work that GSA is performing directly supports VA in providing those services."

By partnering closely with regional as well as national VA officials, GSA has delivered quality space to the ultimate benefit of our nation's returning troops. 



Renovations to an existing 8,800 square feet leased facility in Huntington, West Virginia, were completed in March 2008, and addressed workspace needs for over 50 new VA hires.

Joanna Rosato to Lead Allegheny Service Center

In March 2008, Mid-Atlantic PBS welcomed Joanna Rosato as the new Director of the Allegheny Service Center. The Allegheny Service Center serves federal offices in most of Pennsylvania (excluding the Philadelphia metro area) including Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Scranton, and Erie, and is also responsible for West Virginia, southwest Virginia, and western Maryland.

A graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, Joanna has provided over 23 years of government service within GSA. She began her career as a GSA Buildings Management Specialist co-op. Participation in the co-op program led Joanna to the career intern development program, where she was assigned to GSA's West Philadelphia Field Office.

Joanna continued as a Buildings Manager at several locations within the PBS Mid-Atlantic Region including the Camden, East Philadelphia, and West Philadelphia Field Offices. In September 1996, she became Field Office Manager for the Richmond Field Office, where she was responsible for four million square feet of government-owned and leased space and managed an annual operating budget of \$6 million. Joanna's diligent work with her tenants helped increase overall customer satisfaction by 20 percent in buildings under her responsibility.

In 2000, Joanna joined the GSA Delaware Valley Field Office as Field Office Manager, where she supervised 56 employees and again increased customer satisfaction in buildings under her responsibility by 20 percent. Joanna served as Acting Director for the Office of Customer Service in 2003, working closely with PBS Mid-Atlantic account managers to manage the customer-outreach program.

More recently, Joanna worked as a Transaction Executive (TE), where she supervised transaction managers who oversee multi-disciplinary teams in lease acquisition and construction services for customer agencies in metropolitan Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

Recognized for her exceptional work, Joanna was chosen to serve as Manager for Space and Facilities for the 2008 Presidential Transition Support team (PTST). The PTST provides workspace facilities, telecommunications, and even human resource and financial assistance for the President-elect before his transition to the White House.

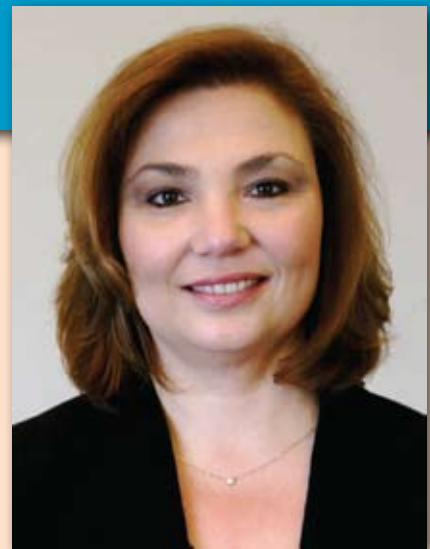
Now serving as Allegheny Director, Joanna is excited to utilize her past experiences at GSA to lead the Service Center. As part of her goal to bring her unique perspective to the Service Center, Joanna will be visiting GSA Field Offices to personally meet with GSA employees and federal tenants.

"I think my background—a customer focus from work in the field offices, combined with project management work as a TE—brings a unique perspective to the position of Service Center Director," says Rosato. "GSA needs to work better and smarter for its customers, and I hope to help our organization in that endeavor."

Join us in welcoming Joanna Rosato to the role of Allegheny Service Center Director. [↗](#)

"GSA needs to work better and smarter for its customers, and I hope to help our organization in that endeavor."

*— Joanna Rosato
Director of the
Allegheny Service Center*



Joanna Rosato, Allegheny Service Center Director

New FEMA Facility: First LEED® Certified Building in Frederick County, VA

On April 8, over 140 guests gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) new Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EP&R) facility in Winchester, VA. Attendees heard remarks from John F. Phelps, GSA Chief of Staff; R. David Paulison, FEMA Administrator; Thomas McQuillan, FEMA Director of Facility Management; and representatives from Cowperwood Company, building owner and developer.

This project began in January 2004 when FEMA requested a 155,523 square foot facility in northwestern Virginia to accommodate office and warehouse space to support their EP&R operations. Since the delineated area did not provide an existing facility to accommodate FEMA's space needs, the project team proceeded to lease a build-to-suit facility. A 15-year lease in Frederick County, Virginia was awarded to Cowperwood Company and FEMA moved into the new facility in April 2008.

This is the second largest FEMA facility in the United States and was designed with the highest security attributes. Although located in a secure area, the building is also easy for employees to access. It is also the first U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Certified Building in Frederick County, Virginia. LEED® certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project is environmentally responsible and is constructed with energy conservation and building sustainability in mind.



Boulders excavated from the construction site were reused as natural security bollards.



Ribbon Cutting from left to right; John F. Phelps, GSA Chief of Staff; R. David Paulison, Administrator of FEMA; Edward Sussi, Cowperwood Development; and Thomas McQuillan, FEMA Director of Facility Management.


This new facility boasts numerous environmentally-friendly

features such as raised floors with an under-floor air distribution system, permeable surfaces in the parking areas to reduce damaging storm-water runoff, bio-swales to collect rainwater, and windows and roofs that take advantage of natural

light. Additional features of this first-class building include:

- Attractive facade entrance
- Third floor outdoor patio area adjacent to large break room
- Green roof over the warehouse
- Native plantings throughout property grounds
- Beautiful exterior amphitheater for large group activities and alternate place to eat lunch
- Exterior window sunshades to help cool the building
- Reuse of excavated boulders as natural security bollards
- Large warehouse with four bay doors
- Ample parking to account for "emergency-surge events"

"GSA saved the government substantial costs through astute project management," said Paul Tertell, FEMA Branch Chief of Real Property Facility Management. "I stopped keeping a running tally at \$1.2 million."

GSA currently has 25 federally-owned and leased buildings nationwide that are either LEED® Certified or designated as LEED® Gold or Silver rated facilities. GSA is pleased to add this facility to our inventory and to offer it as a workplace solution for our federal partners at FEMA. 

GSA Fleet Management Offers FREE Online Defensive Driving Course

Since 1954, GSA has been providing quality vehicles and efficient, economical fleet management services to over 75 participating federal agencies. GSA has one of the largest non-tactical fleets in the federal government with vehicles including automobiles, passenger vans, trucks, buses and ambulances. With more than 210,000 vehicles, the GSA Fleet National Safety Program is committed to stressing the importance of responsible driving.

On average, 115 people die each day in car accidents in the United States (one every 13 minutes), and 85 percent of all crashes nationwide are caused by human error. GSA is determined to help minimize crashes, reduce costs, and ensure we are all more alert drivers.


To this end, GSA is providing a new online Defensive Driving Course. The Defensive Driving Course for Personal Computer (DDC-PC) is based on the same content used in the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course, the most widely used driver-safety program in the world.

The goal of the Defensive Driving Course is to train drivers in collision-prevention techniques while promoting an attitude of mutual understanding, courtesy and cooperation on the road. With DDC-PC you can receive this training at your convenience from your desktop. The course takes approximately four hours to complete and is broken into sessions allowing you to exit and start again at your convenience.

Using state-of-the-art animation and graphics, the online version offers an engaging, interactive learning environment where students analyze real driving situations, spot driving hazards, and identify the correct defenses. Upon course completion, you will receive a certificate of completion from the National Safety Council that, in many states, can be used to lower automobile insurance rates.

We invite you to take advantage of this no-cost training opportunity.

Instructions:

1. Go to <http://drivethru.fss.gsa.gov>
2. Enter your GSA Fleet Customer Number. *Each federal agency with GSA Fleet vehicles has a unique Fleet Customer Number. Please contact GSA's **Brian Knapp** at (215) 446-5033 or brian.knapp@gsa.gov to retrieve yours.*
3. Click the "GSA Fleet Driving Course" button.
4. You will be presented with a registration page. Fill in all your information, including a login ID and a password of your choice, then click "Submit." (Please note - you will receive a confirming email reminding you of the user name and password you created for access to the site at a later date.)
5. On the My Place page, click "Safety."
6. Then on the My Course page, click "NSC Defensive Driving Course 8th Edition" to begin the course. 

Ten most common driver errors:

1. Excessive speeding
2. Failure to wear seat belts
3. Inattentiveness, eating, drinking, smoking, radio volume
4. Distraction inside the car (changing a CD in the CD player)
5. Inadequate defensive driving techniques
6. Incorrect assumptions about other drivers
7. Tailgating or not leaving enough space between vehicles on the open road
8. Not checking traffic before pulling out
9. Passing without checking for traffic in the passing lane
10. Not checking behind for oncoming vehicles when pulling away from a curb



Ask a RAM

End-of-Year Reimbursable Work Authorizations

QUESTION: *What do I need to know about end-of-year Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs)?*

ANSWER: It is hard to believe that even though we are in the midst of enjoying the summer season, the close of fiscal year 2008 is rapidly approaching. **Now** is the time to submit to PBS your Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) needs before the end of the fiscal year.

By providing your requirements to GSA now, we can ensure that we have a clearly defined description of work and a supporting cost estimate that matches the RWA amount. For FY08, all civilian agencies should submit RWA requests to GSA by **September 1, 2008**. RWAs received after September 15, 2008 are at a higher risk for non-acceptance by September 30th, and may be returned to the customer for FY09 funding. RWA requests must be submitted on GSA form 2957 (dated 11/2007) and must include:

1. a clearly defined scope of work including location(s) of where the work is to be performed
2. customer agency bona fide need for the requested goods or services

GSA has developed an informational video presentation titled "Introduction to Reimbursable Services" available online by accessing www.gsa.gov/rwainformation, then "Training" and "Introduction to Reimbursable Services Video." You can open the video to watch on your computer. This video is the first of three to be produced by the GSA National Reimbursable Services Division, and is an overview of the following topics:

- National RWA Team
- RWA Basics
- Laws
- RWA Lifecycle
- RWA Customer Letters

Please contact **Sean McWilliams**, Mid-Atlantic Regional RWA Policy Subject Matter Expert, at (215) 446-2848 or sean.mcwilliams@gsa.gov for more information regarding the GSA RWA process, or feel free to contact your PBS Regional Account Manager.

For our DOD Customers...

Because our Department of Defense (DOD) customers have some additional restrictions on all of their Non-Economy Act Interagency Agreements, all DOD agencies were due to submit their RWA requests to GSA by **July 1, 2008**. Please keep in mind that PBS must accept and sign all DOD RWAs, as well as contractually obligate the funds no later than **September 30, 2008**. This means PBS must award the lease, order, contract, or other document before fiscal year 2008 closes on RWAs funded from an annual appropriation or for a multi-year appropriation that expires in fiscal year 2008. DOD RWAs received after July 1, 2008 are at a higher risk for non-acceptance due to the potential inability to contract for goods, severable services, or non-severable services by September 30th. This may result in a returned RWA to the DOD for FY09 funding.

The screenshot shows the GSA website interface. At the top, the GSA logo and 'U.S. General Services Administration' are visible. A navigation bar contains links for HOME, BUILDINGS, PRODUCTS, SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY, POLICY, and ABOUT GSA. The 'BUILDINGS' link is highlighted. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Buildings > Real Estate Services > Rent > Reimbursable Work Authorizations > About Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs). The main heading is 'About Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs)'. The text below the heading states: 'Reimbursable work authorizations (RWA) are established to capture and bill our customers the cost of:'. A bulleted list follows: Altering, Renovating, Repairing, or Providing services in space managed by GSA over and above the basic operations financed through Rent. On the left side, there is a sidebar menu under the heading 'Rent'. The items in the sidebar are: Overview, Pricing Policy, Reimbursable Work Authorizations, Training (circled in red), RWA FAQs, About Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs), Procedure for Billing Recurring RWAs, RWA Policy and Guidance, and Rent Library.

Fire Protection Engineers are the First Word in Workplace Life Safety

We all understand the life-saving value of fire-protection systems both at home and office environments. This is a service and feature we often take for granted. The Mid-Atlantic Region has a small but dedicated staff of experts to help ensure that every project, lease, and workplace—whether government owned or leased—meets the appropriate fire-protection requirements.


GSA's Fire Protection and Life Safety Program provides a safe and healthy workplace, as well as uninterrupted performance of essential services, and limits federal government losses. GSA implements these objectives for both government-owned and leased buildings and facilities, but the methods employed to ensure compliance are different.

In government-owned facilities, GSA follows the Facilities Standards for PBS—also referred to as the P100. The P100 establishes design standards and criteria for new buildings, major and minor alterations, and work in historic structures for PBS. Chapter 7, Fire Protection and Life Safety for federal owned property, is based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and the International Building Code (IBC) with additional requirements and restrictions specific to GSA. This means that GSA is ensuring the safety of your employees, customers, and visitors up to and beyond the nationally accepted industry benchmark standards.

GSA Fire Protection Engineers (FPEs) act as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) in government-owned property for: all technical requirements in Chapter 7 of the P100, all fire protection and life safety code requirements, and code enforcement requirements. In simple terms, GSA's FPEs serve as the "Fire Marshal" for government-owned property.

No new construction or renovation project can be occupied until the GSA FPE has issued a Certificate of Occupancy to the GSA Project Manager. A Certificate of Occupancy is a document issued to a building owner from the AHJ, which certifies that the building complies with building codes, and indicates its condition is suitable for occupancy. To this end, FPEs also witness acceptance testing, commission fire protection systems (such as sprinklers and fire alarms), and verify that all systems perform in accordance with their design and intent.

The requirements and authority described have been in reference to government-owned facilities. There is a difference in responsibility for leased facilities in that GSA is not the only authority for fire-code compliance in leased space—the local fire official also serves a role. GSA inspects your leased workplace to make sure it complies with applicable fire codes; and if a new construction or a renovation project, ensures compliance with all fire protection features in the contract. This may mean enforcing a fire protection feature that the contract requires, above and beyond the local fire code requirements. FPEs also work with your realty specialist to review fire-safety checklists submitted by potential lessors prior to lease award, ensuring a safe workplace.

GSA is committed to providing you, your clients, employees, and visitors with the safest workplace we can. Please visit www.gsa.gov/fireprotectionengineering and www.gsa.gov/p100, or contact one of the following GSA representatives to learn more about GSA's Fire Protection and Life Safety Program. 

Dave Kriebel
Vince Esposito
Ryan Schartel

dave.kriebel@gsa.gov
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(215) 446-4610
(215) 446-4620
(215) 446-4675

RWA Close-out: Action Required

There is often some confusion about the Close and Completion phase of RWAs, and what it actually means to "close" a RWA. Often times, the assumption is made that a RWA is closed when the work or service is complete. This is not the case.

In order for a RWA to be ready for closure, the following conditions must be met:

- The work or service must be substantially complete and documented by the "RWA Project Completion" letter sent by GSA.
- Contract(s) must be closed out including all invoices paid.
- Financial aspects must be completed in accordance with the billing term established with all bills issued by GSA paid by the customer.

When these three aspects of the RWA are complete, GSA will complete form 2957 and will send the "RWA Close-out" letter. 

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