

May 4, 2005

PQ-2005-04

MEMORANDUM TO ASSISTANT REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, PBS
1P, 2P, 3P, 4P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 8P, 9P, 10P, WP
REGIONAL REALTY SERVICES OFFICERS

THRU: ANTHONY COSTA (signed)
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, PBS - PD

FROM: CRISTOPHER REUTERSHAN (signed)
INTERIM ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR OFFICE OF
NATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGEMENT - PQ

GLEN S. (SAM) HUNTER, JR. (signed)
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
OFFICE OF APPLIED SCIENCE - PL

SUBJECT: Fire Protection, Life Safety, and Environmental Procedures in
Lease Acquisition

1. Purpose. This Realty Services Letter (RSL) issues updated fire protection, life safety and environmental procedures for lease acquisitions including technical corrections to the September 30, 2003 RSL on the same subject. These changes should increase the assurance of safety in leased space, but not result in additional workload for Realty Specialists. The changes are intended to assist Realty Specialists with their understanding and implementation of Fire Protection and Life Safety Requirements.

2. Background.

- a. In 1996 a task group of Realty Specialists and Fire Protection and Environmental Engineers met to address fire safety and environmental requirements for leases. The group recommended simplified fire protection, life safety, and environmental procedures that rely on local codes and national standards rather than detailed specifications. The procedures were issued as PER-96-04, *Safety and Environmental Procedures in Lease Acquisition*, dated October 30, 1996. Over the next several years, similar discussions occurred between Realty Specialists and Fire Protection Engineers regarding the effectiveness of the 1996 RSL. These discussions culminated in an amendment to the procedures by RSL PE-2003-06, *Fire Protection, Life Safety, and Environmental Procedures in Lease Acquisition*, dated September 30, 2003.

- b. Following the issuance of RSL PE-2003-06, a fatal fire occurred in an unsprinklered downtown high-rise office building in Chicago. GSA did not lease space in the building; however, our standards would have allowed a lease, because the building met minimum local code requirements and the Fire Safety Act of 1992. In order to reduce GSA's potential fire risk in space leased in high-rise office buildings, the Fire Protection Engineers recommended additional technical modifications to our standards to address this potential fire safety risk. This RSL implements that recommendation by establishing additional requirements for when space is leased on or above the 6th floor in high-rise office buildings. This new language is similar to the language utilized prior to the issuance of PER-96-04.
 - c. Primary changes in procedures from PE-2003-06 are—
 - (i) Requires the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in all buildings where the Federal Government leases some portion of space on or above the 6th floor, regardless of the amount of space leased in the building. Sprinklers shall be installed up to and including the highest floor of Government occupancy, except in instances where the total amount of space to be leased in a building totals 35,000 square feet or more. In such instances, the requirement for the entire building to be sprinklered, as stated under the previous RSL, still applies.
 - (ii) Clarifies language within the Fire Protection and Life Safety paragraphs of the SFO.
 - (iii) Clarifies language within the GSA Form 3626, U.S. Government Lease for Real Property (Short Form).
 - (iv) Clarifies both versions of the Prelease Fire Protection & Life Safety Evaluation (High-Rise and Low-Rise) forms, regarding their applicability and the information to be surveyed.
 - (v) Assigns official GSA form numbers to the prelease forms.
3. Effective Date/Expiration Date. These instructions and form changes are effective immediately for all new SFOs prepared on or after the date of issuance, and will expire 12 months from the date of issuance, unless extended or canceled. Specialists shall apply these instructions for ongoing acquisitions as appropriate.
 4. Cancellation. Realty Services Letter PE-2003-06, *Fire Protection, Life Safety, and Environmental Procedures in Lease Acquisition*, dated September 30, 2003 is canceled.
 5. Applicability. All real property leasing activities.
 6. Instructions/Procedures. Detailed guidance is included as Attachment 1. The following is a summary of attachments:
 - a. Attachment 1 – Fire Protection, Life Safety, and Environmental Business Practices for Lease Acquisitions.
 - b. Attachment 2 – GSA Form 3626, U.S. Government Lease for Real Property (Short Form).
 - c. Attachment 3 – GSA Form 12000, Prelease Fire Protection & Life Safety Evaluation for a Low-rise Building.

- d. Attachment 4 – GSA Form 12001, Prelease Fire Protection & Life Safety Evaluation for a High-rise Building.
- e. Attachment 5 – SFO Fire Protection & Life Safety Paragraphs.

Attachments