

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS FOR SECRETARIAL APPROVAL

- h:8-05-00 Purpose
10 Policy
20 Agency Responsibility
30 Guidelines

h:
8-05-00 PURPOSE

This chapter sets forth Department policy and procedure to ensure completed staff action on documents submitted to the Secretary for approval or other action. (See General Administration Manual, Chapter 8-60 for submitting requests for organization changes.)

h:
8-05-10 POLICY

- A. Every document submitted to the Secretary for approval should represent completed staff action. Such document should clearly identify the problem(s) and present one or more solutions in a finished form, so that the Secretary can approve or disapprove as a completed action. To accomplish the foregoing, each document submission should:
1. Include proper background material on the basis of which a decision can be made;
 2. Be submitted sufficiently in advance of any time limitations to allow for adequate review by the Secretary and his staff; and
 3. Contain all approvals appropriately annotated, and full explanations of any unresolved differences.

h:
8-05-20 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Principal operating components, staff offices of the Office of the Secretary, or other offices which originate documents are responsible for assuring that the Secretary has adequate information upon which to base a decision. In general, the scope and contents of such documents are matters within the discretion of originating offices. Such information may include:
1. The nature of the submission and the legal requirements or other reasons giving rise to the necessity of its issuance or promulgation. This should include a statement of the legal authority (including statutory citations and any executive orders or other directives) for taking such action.



GUIDELINES
FOR
PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS
TO THE
SECRETARY, THE UNDER SECRETARY, AND
OFFICIALS IN THE SECRETARY'S IMMEDIATE OFFICE

Contents

	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	
A. Purpose and scope.....	1
B. Underlying Policy on Secretarial Communications....	1
II. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORIGINATING OFFICE	
A. Relationship with the Executive Secretariat.....	2
B. Preliminary Steps in Document Development.....	2
III. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF <u>ACTION</u> DOCUMENTS	
A. Technical Requirements.....	3
B. Format for Action Memorandum.....	5
IV. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF <u>INFORMATIONAL</u> DOCUMENTS..	6
V. SUBMISSION OF <u>BRIEFING</u> MEMORANDA FOR MEETINGS.....	6
VI. SUBSTANCE AND STYLE OF SECRETARIAL LETTERS.....	11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Scope

These guidelines set forth instructions on the preparation and submission of documents to the Secretary. These documents include those that request the Secretary to take action, those that provide the Secretary with information, and those that brief the Secretary for meetings.

B. Underlying Policy on Secretarial Communications

Documents requiring the Secretary's approval should represent completed staff action. Completed staff action requires that a document:

1. Clearly identify the problem;
2. Include a concise statement of relevant background material;
3. Be submitted sufficiently in time to allow for adequate review by the Secretary and his staff;

4. Express the concurrence of all offices having a direct responsibility concerning the issue under consideration; and
5. State the recommended courses of action and alternatives.

These guidelines are intended to maximize the productive use of the Secretary's time by ensuring that materials presented to him are clearly and concisely focused on an issue of concern to the Secretary and are properly cleared and coordinated.

As guidelines and not procedures, they should be applied only to the extent that they provide the clearest, most logical presentation of the issue to the Secretary. However, the technical requirements found in Part IIIA should be applied to all documents submitted to the Secretary.

II. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORIGINATING OFFICE

A. Relationship with the Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat is responsible for determining that materials submitted to the Secretary represent completed staff work and are clearly and logically presented. If materials are not properly coordinated or are not clearly presented, the Executive Secretariat may return them to the originating office for further development or redirect them to other appropriate offices for further coordination. Where materials are redirected, the Secretariat will notify the originating office.

The originating office should call upon the desk officers, Deputy Executive Secretaries, and the Correspondence Control Supervisor for advice and guidance on the preparation and coordination of communications to the Secretary.

B. Preliminary Steps in Document Development

The originating office should consult and clear with other offices or individuals whose views should be obtained, including the Office of General Counsel on any legal aspects, the Office of Management and Budget on any budgetary aspects, and the Office of Legislation on any legislative matters.

Principal Operating Components should consult appropriate staff offices (legal, budget, legislation, public information) before submitting documents to the Secretariat. They should also indicate what further coordination or clearance with departmental offices is required when they submit documents to the Secretariat. (See Part IIIA5.)

Staff offices reporting directly to the Secretary should obtain appropriate clearances before submitting documents to the Secretariat.

III. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF ACTION DOCUMENTS

A. Technical Requirements

All action documents, usually prepared as action memoranda, submitted to the Secretary should comply with the following requirements:

1. The memorandum should indicate in capital letters after the subject that it is an "ACTION" memorandum. This means that the Secretary is required to take some action such as a decision among alternatives, or indicate approval.

Example:

Subject: Proposed Regulation on Tea Safety--ACTION

2. A memorandum should be dated and signed or initialed by the head of the initiating office or by the individual to whom the authority to sign for the head has been delegated. The memorandum should be addressed through appropriate line superiors and through the Executive Secretariat and the Under Secretary which may be indicated by the initials ES and US. A line should be provided for the head of each line office to indicate approval.

Example:

Through: U _____
 ES _____
 H _____

3. At the end of the memorandum the name of the individual who prepared the memorandum should be stated. In addition, the date of preparation and the telephone number and office of the individual who prepared the memorandum should be stated. Where the memorandum is revised by an office outside the originating office, the date of revision and the name, telephone number and office of the revisor also should be stated. In addition to stating who prepared the memorandum, the agency may list the name and telephone number of a contact person to whom further inquiries from the Office of the Secretary may be directed.

Example:

Prepared by: OMS: DLSMITH; 2/15/78; 245-4067
 Revised by: OGC: RTJONES; 2/16/78; 245-3333
 Contact: OMS: CBBROWN; 245-8001

4. Where the action recommended includes an outgoing letter or document to be signed by the Secretary, the action memorandum should be placed on top of the letter or document. A tab (always designated Tab A) should be inserted to indicate the document to be signed, and a signature tab should be clipped to the page in front of the page the Secretary should sign.
5. Where an action memorandum submitted to the Secretary requires a decision to be noted by the Secretary on the document itself, the document should show the initials of each office with which the decision paper should be coordinated or cleared. After the office initials, the words "concur", "nonconcur", "see Tab ____", and "date" should follow. The head of each office should express concurrence by signing his/her surname and indicating the date. Any office head who does not concur in the recommendations of the action memorandum should so indicate after the word "nonconcur." A statement of the reasons for the nonconcurrence may be tabbed and included as an attachment. Persons who do not have to clear the memorandum but to whom copies were supplied should be indicated at the bottom of the last page of the memorandum.

Example:CONCURRENCES

GC	Concur _____	Nonconcur _____	Date _____
		See Tab _____	
MB	Concur _____	Nonconcur _____	Date _____
		See Tab _____	

Note: This requirement does not apply to an outgoing letter or document prepared for the Secretary's signature, because the file copy for the letter or document will contain appropriate concurrences.

6. All action memoranda and all documents forwarded with them (including any incoming letter but excluding lengthy reports and similar items) should be submitted to the Executive Secretariat with one original and eight copies. The Executive Secretariat will distribute the copies as appropriate.
7. Where additional information is attached, it should be lettered and tabbed. A listing of the attachments should appear at the end of the memorandum or on a separate page.

8. Where a memorandum is in response to the Secretary's request, begin the memorandum as follows: "This responds to your request of (date) for action on (subject)." Include at an appropriate Tab the note or memorandum from the Secretary or Executive Secretariat in which the action was requested.

B. Format for Action Memorandum

1. The guidelines set forth in Paragraph 2 of this Section B state the factors which the initiating office should consider when preparing action memoranda for the Secretary. These guidelines should be applied flexibly. Specific subject headings should be used only when appropriate. Additional or alternative subject headings should be used when they more clearly present the issue.
2. Most action memoranda submitted to the Secretary should be expressed completely and clearly in less than three pages. Such action memoranda should usually include the following:
 - a. Subject. A title descriptive of the matter being presented.
 - b. Statement of the Problem or Issue. Concise statement of the issue, preferably one sentence.
 - c. Facts. Pertinent information regarding the origin, background and implications of the problem, and qualitative information demonstrating the importance of the problem.
 - d. Discussion. Underlying assumptions, arguments in favor of, and problems with the recommended course of action. Anticipated consequence of proposed course of action.
 - e. Recommendation. Where the recommended action requires the Secretary's signature on a letter, memorandum, or document, the concluding statement should be as follows: "That the Secretary sign the attached document/letter/memorandum." If the action does not require the Secretary's signature, the recommendation should refer to the recommended alternatives under "Decisions."
 - f. Concurrences. Those offices clearing the memorandum should indicate their concurrence or nonconcurrence.
 - g. Decision. (Ten spaces below last line of "Concurrences.") Alternative courses should be contained in numbered paragraphs and phrased so that they constitute a decision when approved. Check-off blocks should be as specific as possible for the Secretary to indicate

his wishes. Usually these should include Approved _____
Disapproved _____ Other _____ Date _____, but they should be
altered to be as precise as possible as to the action
required.

3. The format for action memoranda is shown on Pages 7 and 8.

IV. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENTS

A. Documents submitted to the Secretary for his information should indicate that they are for information by stating INFORMATION after the subject and should include:

1. The subject of the information being transmitted.
2. Purpose--the reasons for submitting the information.
3. Recommended uses of information (if appropriate).
4. The text of the information. (A synopsis of lengthy documents is sometimes useful. Key statements and paragraphs can be marked or tabbed for ready reference.)
5. The signature or initials of the head of the submitting office or his designee.
6. The names of persons to whom copies have been distributed.
7. The name of the person who prepared the information.

B. Information memoranda should be concise and pertinent.

C. Where a memorandum is in response to a request by the Secretary or Executive Secretariat, begin the first sentence with "This responds to your request of (date) for information on (subject)." Include at an appropriate Tab the note or memorandum from the Secretary or Executive Secretariat in which the information was requested.

V. SUBMISSION OF BRIEFING MEMORANDA FOR MEETINGS

Guidelines for briefing memoranda are set forth in this section. They should be applied flexibly, and particular subject headings should be used only to the extent that they present the material concisely and clearly.

See pages 9 and 10 for format and content of briefing memoranda for the Secretary's meetings with HEW officials and visitors.

Briefing memoranda (an original and three) are to be submitted to the Executive Secretariat no later than the close of business two working days prior to the meeting.

FORMAT FOR ACTION MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

TO : The Secretary
Through: US _____
ES _____
H _____

DATE:

FROM : Title and Office of Official
Who Signs Memorandum

SUBJECT: Format for Section III, Part B--ACTION

ISSUE

XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

FACTS

XX
XX
XX
XX
XX

DISCUSSION

XX
XX
XX
XX
XX
XX

RECOMMENDATION

XX
XX

Signature of Head of Originating Office

FORMAT FOR ACTION MEMORANDUM (Continued)

Page 2 - The Secretary

CONCURRENCES

GC Concur _____ Nonconcur _____ Date _____
See tab _____

L Concur _____ Nonconcur _____ Date _____
See tab _____

DECISION (Alternatives)

1. XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Date _____

Other _____

2. XX
XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Date _____

Other _____

3. XX
XX.

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Date _____

Other _____

cc:
ASL, Harrison

Prepared by:MP:JReynolds;2/7/78;245-6793

FORMAT FOR BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARYTO : The Secretary
Through: ES _____

DATE:

FROM : Title and Office of Official Who Signs Memorandum

SUBJECT: BRIEFING
Meeting with (name of individual or group requesting the meeting)March 16, 1978 (Date of meeting)
10 a.m.--20 minutes (Time meeting starts and duration of the
Secretary's participation)I. PURPOSE

This section should state (preferably in one sentence) the purpose of the meeting and indicate who requested the meeting.

II. PARTICIPANTS

This section should state who is participating in the meeting. If outside organizations are involved, include a brief discussion of their relationship with HEW, their interests, and their particular strengths.

III. AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION

This section should state the major points of discussion during the meeting. It is important to identify the issues that are likely to be raised by participants. Therefore, if you feel that the Secretary requires a more in-depth briefing on the background or on the substance pertaining to any particular point of discussion, this information should be included as an attachment and referred to as such in the text of the memorandum.

IV. TALKING POINTS

This section should identify issues or questions the Secretary should raise, recommended responses for the Secretary to use, and topics to avoid or on which the Secretary should be non-committal.

FORMAT FOR BRIEFING MEMORANDUM (Continued)

Page 2 - The Secretary

V. ACTION OR DECISION REQUESTED

This section should specify what action or decisions will be requested of the Secretary. If there are decisions to be made on several issues, each issue should be stated in one paragraph. Where an action memorandum accompanies this briefing to the Secretary, reference can be made in this section to that memorandum for a statement of the issues under consideration.

Signature of Head of Originating Office

cc:
HRA, Sessions

Prepared by: BER:MThomas:3/20/78:245-7912

VI. SUBSTANCE AND STYLE OF SECRETARIAL LETTERS

The Secretary likes his letters crisp, to the point, clear, and responsive to incoming letters. HEW personnel who prepare or review Secretarial letters should find these guidelines helpful in reaching this goal.

A. Substance

1. Be responsive. If the incoming letter asks a series of four questions, the Secretary's response should respond to each question. If necessary, number the answers to correspond to the incoming question.
2. Take a position. If the incoming letter asks what the Department's policy is in a particular area, the Secretary's letter should state our policy forthrightly and clearly. If formulation of a reply requires several offices to convene to make or to clarify policy, the lead office charged with drafting the response should work rapidly with other offices to establish the needed policy. If for reasons of complexity, timing, or politics, policy cannot be formulated immediately in response to the incoming letter, the Secretary's response should say clearly that he is not answering the incoming inquiry, explain why he is not doing so, and outline what steps he is taking to provide a full answer in the near future. (If such clarity is not appropriate for such letters, you should provide a cover note explaining why.)
3. Be brief, but not peremptory. Long-winded backgrounds that provide knowledgeable Congressmen with a lengthy history of a subject are almost always unnecessary, and should not be sent forward.
4. Avoid technical detail. If the response involves substantial technical information, prepare it as an enclosure with a brief cover letter from the Secretary.
5. Never say that regulations do not permit the Department to take an action. Always explain why the Department's regulations adopted the policy at issue.
6. Never say "Thank you for your interest." It is almost always condescending. The people that the Secretary is writing to usually have important responsibilities with respect to HEW programs, or are committed to working to change HEW's policy.

B. Style

1. Avoid long sentences and long paragraphs. If a paragraph or sentence must list three or four or five parallel items, put them in bullets.
2. Use the active voice.
will do to avoid problems in the future.

These suggestions do not provide an exhaustive guide to preparing letters for the Secretary's signature. If additional help is needed, direct your inquiry to your Executive Secretariat.