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## CHAPTER 4. FORM, FORM LETTER AND PATTERN LIBRARY CONTROL

## SECTION A. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth departmental policy and procedures concerning the standardization and control of DVB forms and form letters, supplementary to the provisions of VA Manual MP-1, part II, chapter 4.

## 2. RESPONSIBILITY

a. Department-wide control and liaison with other departments and top staff offices will be maintained by the Department PCO (Publications Control Officer). All proposed forms and form letters originating in Central Office DVB Service/Staff Offices will be subject to review for determination of essentiality, design, specifications, coordination, and final approval by the Department PCO. History files of standardized forms and form letters will be maintained by DVB Central Office (203C2). The control for field station forms and form letters will be maintained by the Station PCO.

b. Each CO DVB Service/Staff Office will designate a PCO liaison to be responsible for review, control and approval of forms and form letters. The designated official will, in addition to other duties, act as liaison officer on all matters affecting form and form letters activity in the respective service.

c. Directors of field stations will exercise, review and control authority through the designated Station PCO who will act as the representative on all matters pertaining to form and form letter activity (including the review, control and approval) of local forms and form letters. The Station PCO will maintain files of local forms and form letters.

d. The Station PCO will be responsible for the review of all proposed field station forms and form letters to determine essentiality, design, specifications, coordination, and final approval. The history files for local items will be maintained at the DVB field station. The file will include: (1) signed original request for the form or form letter (VA Form 70-559, Request for Field Station Form or Form Letter); (2) a copy of the proposed form or form letter; (3) printed copies of each edition of the form or form letter.

e. It will be the joint responsibility of all three levels of the program to effect continued review toward improvement of design and content of existing forms and form letters, improvement of operations through standardization of appropriate new forms or form letters, and effecting

economies in administrative control and reproduction costs. Central Office DVB Service/Staff elements will report discontinuances of forms and form letters to the Department PCO (203C2).

## 3. NUMBERING SYSTEM

a. VA standardized DVB forms and form letters will be numbered by the Department PCO. A numerical prefix to designate the responsible activity will be as follows:

- 20 - Used by two or more elements of DVB
- 21 - Compensation and Pension Service (Adjudication)
- 22 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service (use this prefix for Education forms and form letters only)
- 23 - Administrative Service
- 24 - Finance (Field Stations Only)
- 25 - Personnel (Field Stations Only)
- 26 - Loan Guaranty Service
- 27 - Veterans Assistance Service
- 28 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service (use this prefix for Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling forms and form letters only)
- 29 - Insurance

District Counsel field station forms and form letters will use an 02 designation. Forms and form letters will not be revised solely to change the numerical prefix.

b. Field station forms and form letters will be numbered locally in accordance with the basic system shown for VA standardized DVB forms and form letters, with the addition of the field station number in parenthesis following the basic form or form letter number.

## 4. APPROVAL OF FIELD STATION FORMS AND FORM LETTERS

a. All proposed new or revised field station forms and form letters will be submitted to the Station PCO for approval on VA Form 70-559, along with a copy of the proposed form or form letter. All items on VA Form 70-559 will be completed except for Items 2 and 22 through 28, since the form no longer is submitted to Central Office. The VA Form 70-559 should include all the needed information before being sent to the Station PCO. The PCO will review VA Form 70-559 and a copy of the proposed form or form letter. The VA Form 70-559 should be signed in Item 21 by the Station PCO if approval is given for printing the form or form letter.

ter. A copy of the signed VA Form 70-559, a copy of the proposed form or form letter, and a printed copy of the form or form letter will be placed in the station history file. Field station PCO's will:

(1) Determine whether or not there is any local or standardized form or form letter in existence that would serve the requester's needs.

(2) Determine the need or propriety for the proposed form or form letter (or revision).

(3) Determine whether or not there is an associated item in the RCS (Records Control Schedule) VB-1, to assure proper protection and disposition. (See MP-1, pt. II, ch. 1 for forms with no associated item.)

(4) Approve the request at the station level, if the Station PCO determines that there is a need for the new item or revision to an existing item and

(5) Proceed with printing the form or form letter.

*NOTE: Any proposed Field Station form or form letter that is used to collect information or answers to identical questions or items from ten or more persons requires OMB (Office of Management and Budget) approval and will not be approved at the local level. These items must be submitted to the Central Office DVB PCO for review and approval.*

b. Upon approval by the Station PCO, two printed copies of the new or revised form or form letter will be forwarded to Central Office. Transmittal will be on VA Form 3230 or OF 41 referring the items to "ATTN: DVB PCO (203C2)." The DVB PCO will forward one copy to the controlling service for the form or form letter (e.g., 26 for Loan Guaranty Service) for review. The other copy will be reviewed by the DVB forms staff. After review, if it is determined that the form or form letter should not be an approved item, the Station PCO will be notified to discontinue its use. (This should be the exception, since items have already been determined to be necessary if approved at the Station level.)

c. Employee suggestions involving creation or revision of VA standardized forms and form letters will be directed through proper channels to Central Office (203C2) for evaluation. This includes suggestions involving use of a local item DVB-wide.

## 5. PRODUCTION OF DVB STANDARDIZED FORM LETTERS ON THE WANG WORD PROCESSING SYSTEM

a. Field Stations are authorized to use the Wang Word Processing System to produce DVB Standardized form let-

ters. Central Office will continue to maintain control over the content of these form letters. Central Office will also print and distribute reproducible copies (contact prints) to the field stations whenever there is a new item or revision of an existing form letter. The field station will have the option of using local reproduction equipment to make copies of the letter or placing the letter on the Wang Word Processing System.

b. Production of standardized form letters that require insertion of additional information or contain optional paragraphs with check box selection entries may continue in existing format. Examples of these letters are the FL 21-96 and FL 26-207. However, if the decision is made to use the Wang Word Processing System for production of these items, a separate letter should be developed by extracting pertinent paragraphs from the existing letter. These items will be added to the local pattern letter library. The Station PCO will determine which procedure will be followed for these letters. The letters will be provided by CO as reproducible copies as described in paragraph 5a.

c. There are some form letters which should not be placed on the Wang System, specifically when the format does not lend itself to 8 1/2" x 11" paper; e.g., post cards, continuous form letters (FL 20-680b). OMB-approved form letters will not be placed on the Wang Word Processing System to ensure the content of these form letters is not altered.

d. DVB Standardized form letters placed on the Wang System must show the form letter number and date; e.g., FL 26-645, May 1987 (RS), at the lower right of the page. Those letters that now have the Notice of Procedural and Appellate Rights printed on the reverse must now have these as an attachment. This notice can be a separate page of the letter or VA Form 1-4107, Notice of Procedural and Appellate Rights, may be attached.

e. Upon revision or reprint of a form letter, the station will receive reproducible copies of the letter. It will be the responsibility of the Station PCO to see that the changes are made to the letter if it is being produced on the Wang System.

f. A review of Wang standardized form letters will be made a part of Central Office station reviews.

## 6. CENTRAL OFFICE REQUESTS FOR NEW OR REVISED VA STANDARDIZED FORMS AND FORM LETTERS

a. For Central Office elements, the procedure for requesting new or revised VA Standardized forms and form letters is in MP-1, part II, chapter 4, paragraph 10.

b. All requests for forms and form letters that have extra cost features must have complete justification. Examples of extra cost features requiring justification are specialty type paper such as NCR (no carbon required), colored ink, colored paper, carbon-interleaved sets.

#### 7. RECOMMENDATIONS BY FIELD STATIONS FOR CREATION OR REVISION OF VA STANDARDIZED FORMS AND FORM LETTERS

a. Field Stations may recommend through their PCOs the creation or revision of VA Standardized forms or form letters (for items based on employee suggestions, see subpar. b below). Two copies of the proposed new or revised form or form letter accompanied by letter of justification (no VA Form 70-559 required) will be forwarded to the DVB PCO (203C2).

b. Employee suggestions involving creation or revision of VA Standardized forms or form letters will be directed through proper channels to Central Office for evaluation. This includes suggestions involving use of a local item VA wide (as in subpar. a above, no VA Form 70-559 is required).

#### 8. OVERPRINTING AT FIELD STATIONS

a. The overprinting of VA forms or form letters and standard forms, optional forms, or other Government forms with "repetitive fill-in data" will be submitted to the Station PCO for approval. NOTE: When overprinting Standard forms always use latest edition even though the supersession notice may state previous editions may be used. Central Office approval is not required and identification as a local form or form letter is not required on this item.

b. Overprinting which changes the intent or content of any standardized form or form letter will be submitted to Central Office for approval prior to use in the manner indicated in MP-1, part II, chapter 4, paragraph 15b(1)(2).

c. Forms and form letters with OMB (Office of Management and Budget) approval (identified by the OMB approval number printed in the upper right corner) will not be overprinted with any information except the station name and address. Overprint of any other information is prohibited. OMB approval must be secured by Central Office program officials prior to addition or change of any item on a public-use information collection document.

#### 9. FIELD STATION FORM AND FORM LETTER REPORT

a. VA Form 23-6501, Field Station Form and Form Letter Report, will be prepared and submitted in original only. Forms and form letters pertaining to activities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Benefits will be included in this report. District Counsel local forms and form letters will also be included as a separate category.

b. The report will review the activity during the report period and will show the number of forms and form letters approved for use and discontinued.

c. The report will include a listing on VA Form 23-6501, of all forms and form letters currently active. The date of the edition in use will be shown.

d. This is an annual report prepared as of the last day of December and no subsequent actions will be reported after that date. Forward the report to reach Central Office no later than the 20th workday of January to:

Department of Veterans Benefits (203C2)  
Veterans Administration Central Office  
Washington, DC 20420

e. RCS 20-0285 is assigned to this report.

## CHAPTER 4. FORM, FORM LETTER AND PATTERN LIBRARY CONTROL

## SECTION B. PATTERN LIBRARY CONTROL

## 1. PURPOSE

A pattern library has been developed and placed on DVB Wang Systems nationwide. This section sets forth departmental policy and procedures concerning the standardization and control of documents in the pattern libraries.

## 2. GENERAL

a. The objective of the pattern library is to provide a system for controlling and enhancing the utilization of repetitive material which is responsive to department needs and sound from a policy as well as legal standpoint.

b. Field Stations have authority to incorporate the centralized DVB Pattern Library into their local pattern libraries. The pattern letter library will be under the control of the station PCO. The station PCO will be the approval authority for any corrections, additions and deletions to the pattern letter library.

c. Items may be placed in the local pattern library when printed form letters are impractical because of too much variation in subject matter or a printed letter seems inappropriate.

d. There will be continued review toward improvement of design and content of existing pattern library items, improvement of operations through standardization of appropriate new pattern library items, and effecting economies in administrative control and reproduction costs through department wide standardization and consolidation of local pattern library items. Central Office will periodically review the local libraries to ensure that these standards are met.

3. DEFINITIONS. The pattern library will consist of repetitive items that are pertinent to DVB operations nationwide. The pattern library items may be a letter, paragraph, text to be included on a form, or other repetitive material.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES—FIELD STATIONS

a. Field Station directors will exercise review and control authority through the designated Station PCO who will act as the controlling official on all matters pertaining to pattern library activity and maintain files on the pattern library items. All proposed pattern library items will be subject to review for determination of essentiality, coordination, and final approval by the Station PCO. Files of the pattern library items will be maintained by the Station.

b. The Station PCO will be responsible for the review, control, approval, and discontinuance of pattern library items. Since the local pattern libraries will now incorporate the centralized DVB Pattern Library, any duplicate items should be merged into one.

c. At the direction of the Station PCO, local form letters may be incorporated into the pattern library. Those local letters, where printed copies will continue to be maintained and used at the station, will be controlled by following the procedures for local forms and form letters described in paragraph 4(a) and (b).

d. All new or proposed pattern library items will be submitted to the Station PCO for control and numbering using VA Form 20-8953, Request for New or Revised Pattern Library Item. For reference and history, a standard numbering system will be used. A numerical prefix to designate the responsible activity will be as follows:

- 20 - Used by two or more elements of DVB
- 21 - Compensation and Pension Service
- 22 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service  
(use this prefix for Education forms and form letters only)
- 23 - Administrative Service
- 24 - Finance
- 25 - Personnel
- 26 - Loan Guaranty Service
- 27 - Veterans Assistance Service
- 28 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service  
(use this prefix for Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling forms and form letters only)
- 29 - Insurance