

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 1/18/01

Series: Departmental Management

Part 302: Automatic Succession

Chapter 1: Designation of Successors for Supervisors

Originating Office: Office of Planning and Performance Management

302 DM 1

1.1 **Purpose.** This chapter provides Departmental requirements regarding the responsibilities, standards, and procedures for automatic succession for all Departmental decision makers and supervisors not subject to 5 U.S.C. " 3345 et seq. (the Vacancies Act). Requirements for succession for positions covered by the Vacancies Act [positions that are Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS)], other than Secretarial positions, are provided in 302 DM 2. Requirements for succession for Secretarial positions are described in 302 DM 3.

1.2 **Automatic Succession.** In the absence of an incumbent or in the event of a vacancy in a supervisory position not covered by the Vacancies Act, the duties of the position shall be temporarily assumed by another individual serving in an acting capacity. Permanent arrangements must be made for automatic succession to all such supervisory positions.

1.3 **Responsibilities.** The head of each bureau or office is responsible for ensuring that automatic succession is provided for his or her position and all other positions requiring successors. Each bureau and office head is also responsible for ensuring that the arrangements for succession are made in accordance with prescribed standards in this chapter or in 302 DM 2 as appropriate.

1.4 **Standards.** The standards for designating successor positions are provided below:

A. Designations are to be made in writing and should be consistent with the language found in Appendix A.

B. Designations are to be made by the incumbent supervisor, with the concurrence of the official who has supervisory authority over the supervisor.

C. Designations are to be made by position title, not by a person's name.

D. The number of designations for a given position should be sufficient to allow for multiple absences, especially in emergencies such as the activation of the applicable Continuity of Operations Plan.

E. A list of incumbents of designated positions must be kept current and available; all changes should be made as promptly as possible and attached to the existing position designations.

F. The lists of designated positions and incumbents must be reviewed, updated, and signed annually by office heads; notwithstanding the annual review, any changes in office staffing or structure that affect the designated positions should be reflected in revised designations (and list of incumbents in those positions) as promptly as possible.

G. An original copy of the designation of successor positions and the list of incumbents in the positions are to be included in the organization's permanent records. The documents are considered Emergency Operating Records of the originating office and are to be identified and protected in accordance with the applicable Vital Records Plan. All updates or revisions shall be treated in the same manner. Outdated records are to be disposed of in accordance with the applicable Records Retention Plan.

H. Copies of the designations and the list of incumbents are to be provided on a timely basis to appropriate officials including the officials responsible for the organization's Continuity of Operations Plan. Copies are also to be provided to individuals designated to serve as successors. At least one copy must be readily available within the affected office.

I. The format for designating successors is provided in Appendix A.

1.5 Delegations of Authority to Successors. Incumbents in all of the positions covered in this chapter are delegated authority to perform all duties and responsibilities of the supervisor when required. Authority to act as the head of an organization may be exercised only when there is reasonable certainty that a superior is unable and unavailable to exercise authority and when immediate action is required. Individuals acting as successors will be relieved of his or her authority as soon as a supervisor on the list is available, able, and assumes the role of successor, or when an official with requisite authority designates a permanent or acting supervisor. Individuals exercising the authority of a supervisor will keep a record of important actions taken and the period during which the authority is exercised.

1.6 Record of Succession for Departmental Offices. The original copy of documents prepared in accordance with 302 DM 1.4 in the Office of the Secretary (including the Immediate Office of the Secretary, Secretarial Offices, offices reporting to the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget, and Assistant Secretarial offices) shall be forwarded to the Office of Planning and Performance Management for inclusion in the Department's permanent records. All updates or revisions shall be submitted to that office. Copies of all such documents are to be provided by the originating office to the Department's Emergency Coordinator in the Office of Managing Risk and Public Safety and to the Associate Solicitor for General Law.

1.7 Temporary Designations of Acting Officials.

A. Temporary designations may be made for occasions when deviation from automatic succession is desired. Temporary designations are to be identified and documented in a manner

similar to automatic succession. Documentation should also include the period covered. A sample format for preparing temporary designations is provided in Appendix B.

B. Temporary designations must be in writing and must be issued or approved by the official having supervision over, or appointing authority for, the position to be filled temporarily. After approval, the document describing the temporary designation is returned directly to the originating office for record keeping.

302 DM 1
Appendix A

Memorandum

To:

From:

Subject: Designation of Successors for Supervisors

The following positions in the [office/organization] will automatically succeed the head of the [office/organization] in the absence of the incumbent head and in the order listed. Incumbents in all of the positions listed are hereby delegated the authority to perform all duties and responsibilities of the head of the office/organization when required to ensure continued, uninterrupted direction and supervision and to perform essential functions and activities of the office. The authority to act as the head of [name of organization] may be exercised only when an official in one of the following positions is reasonably certain that no supervisor on the list is able and available to exercise the authority and when the nature of the situation requires immediate action. Individuals acting as successors will be relieved of authority as soon as a superior on the list is available, able, and assumes the role of successor, or when an official with the requisite authority designates a permanent or acting head of the office. Individuals exercising the authority of the head of the office will keep a record of important actions taken and the period during which they have exercised that authority.

Position One:

Position Two:

Position Three:

Position Four:

Position Five:

Name and Title of the Head of the Office:

Signature of the Head of the Office

Date

Concur:

Attachment: List of incumbents to above positions.

302 DM 1
Appendix B

Memorandum

To:

From:

Subject: Temporary Designation of Acting Officials

In the absence of the (position title) from (month, day, year) through (month, day, year) or beginning (month, day) and until his/her return, the (position title) will perform as Acting (position title).

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