

## Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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**Series:** Departmental Management  
**Part 302:** Automatic Succession  
**Chapter 3:** Secretarial Succession

**Originating Office:** Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs

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### 302 DM 3

3.1 **Acting Secretary.** Automatic succession to the position of Secretary of the Interior is provided by Executive Order 13915 – Providing an Order of Succession Within the Department of the Interior, dated April 14, 2020 (published in the Federal Register, April 17, 2020 - 85 FR 21733). Section 1 of the Order provides that: “Subject to the provisions of section 3 of this Executive Order, the officers named in section 2, in the order listed, shall act as and perform the functions and duties of the office of Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) during any period when both the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of the Interior have died, resigned, or are otherwise unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of Secretary.” Section 3 of Executive Order 13915 provides that: “No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 2 of this order in an acting capacity shall, by virtue of so serving, act as Secretary pursuant to this order.” It further provides that: “Notwithstanding the provisions of this order, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, to depart from this order in designating an acting Secretary.”

A. **Designation by the Secretary.** In accordance with Executive Order 13915, when neither the Secretary nor the Deputy Secretary is available to exercise the power or perform the duties of the Secretary, the Departmental officials listed in the following order shall act as Secretary:

- (1) Solicitor
- (2) Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget
- (3) Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management
- (4) Assistant Secretary – Water and Science
- (5) Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
- (6) Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
- (7) Assistant Secretary – Insular and International Affairs

B. In emergency situations when none of the officials listed in 302 DM 3.1A, above, are available to exercise the Secretary's authority, the following positions are delegated full authority of the Secretary in the order listed and until such time as one of the officials listed above him or her is available to exercise the Secretary's authority:

- (1) Director, Bureau of Land Management
- (2) Regional Director, Interior Region 7, U.S. Geological Survey
- (3) Regional Director, Interior Regions 6, 7, and 8, National Park Service
- (4) Regional Director, Interior Regions 5 and 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- (5) Director, Policy and Programs, Bureau of Reclamation
- (6) Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management
- (7) Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region

C. No individual serving in an office listed in 302 DM 3.1A or 3.1B in an acting capacity shall, by virtue of so serving, exercise the Secretary's authority.

3.2 **Acting Deputy Secretary or Assistant Secretary.** Succession to the position of Deputy Secretary or Assistant Secretary is provided by Executive Order 9794, dated October 26, 1946, which authorizes and designates the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, when so directed by the Secretary of the Interior, to perform the duties of the Deputy Secretary of the Interior or of an Assistant Secretary of the Interior in the event of the death, resignation, absence, or sickness of the Deputy Secretary or of an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, respectively.