

**Forest Service Manual  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 1300 – Management  
Chapter 1370 - Forms Management**

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**Superseded Directive:** 1370, Amendment 1300-2009-2, June 18, 2009

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**Responsible Staff:**

**Explanation of changes:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

**1370:** Minor technical and editorial changes made.

**1370.1:** Revises citation Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended, 44 U.S.C. 3101 to include 3102 and Paperwork Reduction Act date to 1995.

**1370.43:** Changes caption to “Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry Director”.

**1370.43a:** Changes responsibilities caption to “Regional Station, Area, Forest Products Laboratory, and International Institute of Tropical Forestry Forms Managers”.

**1370.44:** Creates section for “National Forest and Grassland Supervisors and National Recreation, Scenic Area and Monument Managers”.

**1370.44a:** Adds responsibilities for “National Forest and Grassland and National Recreation, Scenic Area, and Monument Forms Managers”.

**1370.45:** Relocates “Washington Office Staff Coordinators” information to new section.

**1370.5:** Adds definition for “Agency-wide form”

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## 1370.1 - Authority

Basic authorities and requirements for a forms management program are:

1. Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended (44 U.S.C. 3101-3102), requires the head of each Federal agency to:
  - a. Make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the Agency and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the Agency's activities; and
  - b. Establish and maintain an active, continuous program for the economical and efficient management of the records of the Agency.
2. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as amended (44 U.S.C. 3501-3502), requires Federal agencies to minimize the paperwork burden on the public, while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of Federal Government programs.
3. Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998 (44 USC 3501), requires Federal agencies to allow individuals or entities that deal with agencies to submit information or transact with an agency electronically, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable.
4. Federal Management Regulations 102-193 and 102-194 (FSH 6409.31), ensure accurate and complete documentation of policies and transactions of the Federal Government.
5. Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 1220.30), reiterates requirements found in 44 U.S.C. 3101.
6. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-130 (revised) and Appendices I-IV, establishes policy for management of Federal information resources.
7. Standard and Optional Forms Procedural Handbook, General Services Administration (GSA), prescribes the standards, methods, techniques, and operating procedures for the Standard and Optional Forms Management Program.
8. Departmental Regulation 3020-1 (Departmental Forms Manual), prescribes policies, responsibilities, standards, and procedures for forms management throughout the Department of Agriculture.
9. Departmental Regulation 3410-001 (Information Collection Activities), provides instructions concerning the preparation, review, and clearance associated with the collection of information and record keeping requirements imposed by USDA agencies

on individuals, businesses, and other private institutions and State and local governments.

## **1370.2 - Objectives**

1. Manage the Forest Service Forms Program to collect necessary information effectively and efficiently, and to eliminate duplication while meeting all statutory requirements.
2. To provide for:
  - a. Increased productivity and economy through simplified, cost-effective practices and procedures for designing standard software, and electronically generating, distributing, using, and managing Forest Service forms and exceptions.
  - b. Creation of Forest Service forms based on a valid need and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), and Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS).
  - c. Elimination of unnecessary forms, regardless of media.
  - d. Improved coordination of the Forms Program with other Forest Service activities and programs where appropriate.
3. Conserve natural resources, fuel, facility, storage, and man-hours through elimination of paper forms to the maximum extent possible.

## **1370.3 - Policy**

1. The Forest Service Forms Management Program must:
  - a. Ensure that only approved forms are available to and used by agency personnel.
  - b. Ensure that Forest Service forms comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements, with instructions and use outlined in the directive system when appropriate.
  - c. Control the quality and quantity of forms produced by the Forest Service.
  - d. Reduce form reproduction costs.
  - e. Provide guidance to employees on the development, approval, and use of forms.
  - f. Make provision for temporary forms.
2. The following types of formats are exempted from the Forest Service Forms Program:

- a. Surveys approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB),
  - b. One-time use forms as defined in FSM 1370.5,
  - c. Internal routing slips,
  - d. Letterhead, and
  - e. Worksheets created for and used only by originating unit.
3. The following items are not forms, but are assigned special form numbers to facilitate storage at and retrieval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Forms warehouse.
  - a. Paper or specialty printed tags or labels, and
  - b. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved survey instruments that have large, diverse distribution requirements.

#### **1370.4 - Responsibility**

##### **1370.41 - Washington Office Staff Directors**

Each Washington Office Staff Director shall:

1. Designate a Staff Forms Coordinator and send the selected employee's name and contact information to the Washington Office, National Forms Manager.
2. Include the National Forms Manager in all agency efforts involving forms, including but not limited to creation, design, software, policies, procedures, and access.

##### **1370.42 - Director, Office of Regulatory and Management Services**

The Director, Office of Regulatory and Management Services, has the overall responsibility for management of the Forms Program.

##### **1370.42a - National Forms Manager**

The National Forms Manager shall:

1. Assist the Washington Office Staff Forms Coordinators, and Field Forms Managers in meeting the objectives and implementing the policies of the Forms Program.
2. Provide leadership and establish controls in the creation, use, and maintenance of forms.

3. Review and approve all new and revised agency forms for the Washington Office (including detached offices) and Agency-wide use.
4. Evaluate forms processes and recommend changes as necessary to improve the program.
5. Approve field exceptions (including content exceptions) to approved Agency-wide forms.
6. Represent the Forest Service to the USDA, other governmental agencies, and contractors in matters pertaining to forms management.
7. Participate in all efforts involving forms in the Washington Office, Washington Office detached offices (such as the Albuquerque Service Center), and Agency-wide, including but not limited to design, software, policies, procedures, and access.
8. Report violations of regulations and policies pertaining to forms management to appropriate management officials and monitor resolution of violations.
9. Keep Washington Office Staff and Field Offices informed of forms management issues, both general and specific.
10. Provide and maintain current direction and updates to FSM 1370 and FSH 1309.14, chapter 10.
11. Provide advice and counsel to field Forms Managers and Employees.
12. Ensure that all requests and decisions regarding new, revised, and obsolete forms follow procedures outlined in FSH 1309.14.
13. Direct, coordinate, and conduct reviews of all Forest Service Agency-wide forms, as well as field forms programs, including but not limited to field forms (content, appearance and documentation), content of internal and external Web pages, and unit form policies.

**1370.43 - Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Forest Products Laboratory Director, International Institute of Tropical Forestry Director**

Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Forest Products Lab Director, and International Institute of Tropical Forestry Director, shall designate a Forms Manager and submit the name and contact information of the designated employee to the National Forms Manager.

### **1370.43a - Regional, Station, Area, Forest Products Laboratory, and International Institute of Tropical Forestry Forms Managers**

Regional, Station, Area, Forest Products Laboratory, and International Institute of Tropical Forestry Forms Managers have the responsibility on their respective units to:

1. Assist the National Forms Manager in meeting the objectives and implementing the policies of the Forms Program by:
  - a. Providing leadership and establishing controls in the creation, use, and maintenance of forms.
  - b. Reviewing and approving new and revised unit forms.
  - c. Representing the field in reporting to the National Forms Manager, including evaluation of forms processes and recommending necessary improvements to the Program.
  - d. Reporting violations of regulations and policies pertaining to forms management to appropriate management officials and monitor resolution of violations.
  - e. Keeping appropriate staff, units, and employees informed of forms management issues.
  - f. Supplementing national direction (FSM 1370 and FSH 1309.14, ch. 10) as needed to implement and manage unit Forms Programs.
  - g. Directing, coordinating, and conducting reviews of unit forms, as well as forms programs and policies, including but not limited to content, appearance, and documentation; and content of internal and external unit forms Web pages.
  - h. Seeking official approval for field unit exceptions (including content exceptions) to approved Agency-wide forms.
2. Ensure that local Forms Management Programs meet the objectives found in FSM 1370.2, and such programs comply with the policies, regulations, and direction set forth in this chapter and FSH 1309.14, chapter 10.
3. Contact the National Forms Manager and appropriate Staff Director to propose new or revised Agency-wide forms; or request an Agency-wide form be declared obsolete.
4. Ensure that all field intranet form pages link to the Agency-wide Intranet forms page and do not contain independent postings of Agency-wide or other non-unit forms.

#### **1370.44 - National Forest and Grassland Supervisors and National Recreation, Scenic Area, and Monument Managers**

National Forest and Grassland Supervisors and National Recreation Area, Scenic Area, and Monument Managers may designate a Forms Manager and submit the name and contact information of the designated employee to the Regional Forester and Regional Forms Manager.

#### **1370.44a - National Forest and Grassland and National Recreation, Scenic Area, and Monument Forms Managers**

National Forest and Grassland and National Recreation, Scenic Area, and Monument Forms Managers have the responsibility on their respective units to:

1. Assist the Regional Forms Manager in meeting the objectives and implementing the policies of the Forms Program by:
  - a. Providing leadership and establishing controls in the creation, use, and maintenance of forms.
  - b. Reviewing and approving new and revised unit forms.
  - c. Representing the field in reporting to the Regional Forms Manager, including evaluation of forms processes and recommending as necessary to improve the program.
  - d. Reporting violations of regulations and policies pertaining to forms management to appropriate management officials and monitor resolution of violations.
  - e. Keeping appropriate staff, units, and employees informed of forms management issues.
  - f. Supplementing direction (FSM 1370 and FSH 1309.14, ch. 10) as needed to implement and manage unit Forms Programs.
  - g. Directing, coordinating, and conducting reviews of unit forms, as well as Forms Programs and policies, including but not limited to content, appearance, and documentation; and content of internal and external unit forms web pages.
  - h. Seeking official approval for field unit exceptions (including content exceptions) to approved Agency-wide forms.
2. Ensure that local Forms Management Programs meet the objectives found in FSM 1370.2, and such programs comply with the policies, regulations, and direction set forth in this chapter and FSH 1309.14, chapter 10.

3. Contact the Regional Forms Manager and appropriate Staff Director to propose new or revised Agency-wide forms; or request an Agency-wide form be declared obsolete.
4. Ensure that all field Intranet form pages link to the Agency-wide Intranet forms page and do not contain independent postings of Agency-wide or other non-unit forms.

#### **1370.45 - Washington Office Staff Coordinators**

Washington Office Staff Coordinators shall ensure that Washington Office staff forms management programs (including those in Washington Office detached offices) meet the objectives cited in section 1370.2 and FSH 1309.14, chapter 10.

#### **1370.5 - Definitions**

See FSH 1309.14, chapter 10 for additional definitions.

Agency-wide form. A form intended for use in more than one Forest Service region.

Content exception. An addition, change to, or deletion of one or more data elements on an approved Forest Service form.

Electronic Form (e-form). An officially prescribed set of data residing in an electronic medium that can be used to produce a mirror-like image or as near to a mirror-like image as the creation of software will allow of the officially prescribed form or be purely prescribed fields for collecting data that can be integrated, managed, processed, and/or transmitted through an organization's information processing systems. There are two types of electronic forms - one that is part of an automated transaction and one where the image/data elements reside on a computer.

Exception. An approved change to the content, format, or printing of an approved Forest Service form.

Forest form. A form intended for use on no more than one forest.

Form. A fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for gathering, organizing, and transmitting prescribed information quickly and efficiently. Forms may be paper or electronic (e-form). A completed form is considered a record and complies with all regulations cited in Federal Management Regulation (FMR) 102-193, 44 USC 3101 and 36 USC 1220.30.

Format. A guide, table, template, sample, or exhibit that illustrates a predetermined arrangement or layout for presenting data.

Forms Management. An element of records and information management involving the use of management analysis techniques to develop, design, produce, stock inventory, and distribute forms.

Label. Preprinted document that relays information and is attached to an object with adhesive. Labels are forms if they collect information. Non-form labels are assigned identification numbers if specialty printed and available to Forest Service personnel from the USDA forms warehouse.

Letterhead. The heading at the top of a letter, usually a name and address; letterhead is not a form.

Mirror-like image. A graphical replica of the official image created by computer software to the best exactness as the software will allow. Some variations will be expected in fonts, margins, and exact size of entry field.

Non-form Item. A printed product without spaces for entering information. Some non-form items (such as tags) are part of the Forest Service Forms Program, so that they may be controlled Agency-wide. Non-form items, such as tags, are assigned identification numbers if specialty printed and available to Forest Service personnel from the USDA forms warehouse.

Official Image. Approved image approved by appropriate Forest Service official and issued for use.

One-time Use Form. A form created for a specific, single use. A blank form sent (cumulatively) to no more than one individual or employee, completed by the recipient, and returned to the sender a single time. It is not meant to be sent to several units with the intent of getting a one-time response. A form used annually that undergoes revision before each use is not a one-time use form.

Optional Form. A form developed by a Federal agency for use in two or more agencies, and approved by GSA for non-mandatory Government-wide use.

Regional form. A form intended for use on more than one forest within a single region.

Standard Form. A Standard Form (SF) is a fixed or sequential order of data elements prescribed by a Federal agency through regulation approved by GSA for mandatory use, and assigned a Standard Form number.

Tag. A reprinted document (usually paper) relaying information and usually attached to an item. A tag is classified as a form only if used to collect information.

Temporary Form. A form with a limited life span, linked to an Interim Directive (ID), which expires when the ID expires. The temporary form may be renewed when the associated ID is reissued, but may not have a life span longer than that allowed for interim directives (3 years total).

### **1371 - Challenging Forms**

All employees are encouraged to critically evaluate all forms that they are required to complete, submit, or review, and to recommend improvements to the unit or National Forms Manager

(as appropriate). This includes Forest Service (FS) forms, USDA (AD) forms, Standard (SF) forms, Optional (OF) forms, as well as any other Federal forms used in the course of conducting Agency business or associated with Federal employment. The recommendation should document the rationale for the challenge and one or more of the following:

1. Identification of other forms that provide all or part of the information requested.
2. Explanation or description of why the form is overly cumbersome, inefficient, or inadequate.
3. Explanation of why information requested is not available, is available only at an unreasonable cost, or is of questionable value.
4. Explanation of why the form has lost validity or currency.