

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

**Forest Service Manual 1600 – Information Services  
Chapter 1690 - Internal Communications**

**Amendment:** 1600-2018-5

**Effective date:** August 20, 2018

**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Superseded Directive:** 1690, Amendment 1600-2002-4, May 17, 2002

**Approved by:** J. Lenise Lago, Acting Associate Chief

**Date approved:** August 02, 2018

**Responsible Staff:**

**Posting Instructions:** Amendments are numbered consecutively by title and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this title was 1600-2018-4 to FSM 1650.

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

**1690.1:** Reintroduces this code and assigns it to identify Authority.

**1690.2:** Redefines the “Objectives” sections to be achieved through internal communication.

**1690.3:** Revises the direction in the Policy section to clearly state the intent of the Internal Communication Program.

**1690.41a:** Renumbers and clarifies the role and responsibility of Washington Office Communication Director with respect to internal communication efforts.

**1690.41b:** Renumbers and establishes the role and responsibility of the Internal Communication Manager.

**1691 - 1691.6:** Removes obsolete direction on Electronic Media (formerly FSM 1691.1); Web sites on Forest Service Web (FS Web) Intranet and World Wide Web (WWW) Internet (formerly FSM 1691.11); Electronic mail (e-Mail) (formerly FSM 1691.12); Electronic Publishing (formerly FSM 1691.13); FS Today (formerly FSM 1691.14); CD-Rom (formerly FSM 1691.15); Computer-based Graphic Slide Presentation (formerly FSM 1691.16); Conferences and Meetings (formerly FSM 1691.2); Videotape and Audiovisual Productions (formerly FSM 1691.3); Personal Communications between Managers and Employees (formerly FSM 1691.6).

Adds direction on Inside the Forest Service (FSM 1691.1); Inside the Forest Service - Article Submissions (FSM 1691.1a); Inside the Forest Service - Photo and video standards (FSM 1691.1b); Internal Web Discussion Forums (FSM 1691.2); E-mail communications (FSM 1691.3); Leadership Town Halls (FSM 1691.4); Chief Speeches (FSM 1691.5);

**1691.6:** Recodes direction on Printed Materials formerly in section 1691.5.

**1691.7 - 1691.9:** Adds direction on Forest Service Intranet (FSM 1691.7); Digital Media (FSM 1691.8).

**1691.9:** Recodes direction on Other Methods of Communication formerly in section 1691.7.

**1692:** Removes obsolete direction on Internal Communication Research.

## Table of Contents

<b>1690.1 - Authority.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1690.11 - Agency and Departmental Guidance .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1690.12 - Copyright.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1630.13 - Visual Management and Design .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1630.14 - Equal Opportunity Policy, Public Notification, and Section 508 Compliance .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1690.2 - Objectives .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1690.2a - Internal Communication Intent .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1690.3 - Policy .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1690.4 - Responsibility .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1690.41 - Washington Office .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1690.41a - Washington Office Communication Director .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1690.41b - Internal Communication Manager, Office of Communication.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1690.42 - Field Units.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1690.42a - Regional Internal Communication Manager .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1690.42b - Forest Internal Communication Managers .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1691 - Internal Communication Methods.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1691.1 - Inside the Forest Service.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1691.1a - Inside the Forest Service - Article Submissions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1691.1b - Inside the Forest Service - Photo and Video Standards.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.2 - Internal Web Discussion Forums.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.3 - E-mail Communication .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.4 - Leadership Town Halls.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.5 - Chief Speeches .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.6 - Printed Materials.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.7 - Forest Service Intranet .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1691.8 - Digital Media.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1691.9 - Other Methods of Communication .....</b>	<b>11</b>

## **1690.1 - Authority**

### **1690.11 - Agency and Departmental Guidance**

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture Departmental Regulations (DR) 1410, 1420, 1430, and 1470. These administrative regulations establish information and publications policy, authority, responsibilities, and functions of the Department and its agencies and give further guidelines for implementing the public Printing law as it applies to publications and administrative documents and their printing and distribution.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Departmental Regulation (DR) 1400-1, Information Policies. This regulation establishes policies and procedures for USDA and its agencies concerning information activities in printed, audiovisual, graphic, electronic, and other media forms. It includes guidance on the appropriate approval procedures for multimedia information campaigns.
3. Departmental Regulation 3430–001 (DR 3430–001). Provides direction on the development and maintenance of internet Websites. <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/departamental-regulation-3430-001>
4. Departmental Regulation 1440–002 (DR 1440–002). Provides detailed policy guidance for production and dissemination of current information materials, principally news releases, background material, media advisories, and similar information for working with news media representatives. <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/departamental-regulation-1440-002>
5. Departmental Regulation 3440–002 (DR 3440–002). Provides policy guidance on the control and protection of "Sensitive Security Information." <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/departamental-regulation-3440-002>
6. U.S. Department of Agriculture, "New Media Roles, Responsibilities and Authorities, 1495-001, May 23, 2011. [https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR1495-001\\_0.htm](https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR1495-001_0.htm)
7. U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Digital Style Guide," January 2013. <https://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=DigitalStyleGuide.html>

### **1690.12 - Copyright**

The Copyright Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-553; 90 Stat. 2541; 17 U.S.C. Chapters 1-13) sets forth the subject matter and media that are covered by copyright and describes the scope and limitations of exclusive rights.

### **1630.13 - Visual Management and Design**

The [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Visual Standards Guide](#), January 2013, provides direction regarding the use and application of the USDA symbol, as well as detailed direction regarding standardized signature model.

### **1630.14 - Equal Opportunity Policy, Public Notification, and Section 508 Compliance**

USDA Departmental Regulation 4300-3 (DR-4300-3), "Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy", establishes policy for ensuring positive and continuing notification of USDA equal opportunity policy to the public and USDA employees. See DR-4300-3 for the complete wording and required use of the nondiscrimination statement on all material produced by USDA and its agencies for public information, public education, or public distribution. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Pub. L. 93-112, Stat. 355, 29 U.S.C. 794), requires Federal agencies to provide disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to access available to others.

### **1690.2 - Objectives**

Effectively communicate the strategic vision and priorities of the organization, as well as address major issues that affect all Forest Service employees. Improve accessibility and opportunities for two-way communication between Forest Service employees and leadership.

#### **1690.2a - Internal Communication Intent**

The Internal Communication program aims to provide strategic level communication between Forest Service leadership and employees on agency policies, activities, and issues. The intent is to accomplish this goal by achieving one or more of the following communication objectives in every initiative the program undertakes:

1. Leadership Recognition: Raises the profile of leadership among employees so that there is greater recognition and understanding of who is leading the agency at different levels.
2. Leadership Vision and Priorities: Effectively communicates the strategic vision and priorities of the organization as well as addresses major issues that affect all FS employees.
3. Leadership Access: Improves accessibility and opportunities for two-way communication between employees and senior agency leadership.

This program is not intended as:

1. A clearinghouse for any information people may want to get out agency wide. The focus of this program lies with strategic level information that directly assists leadership

in communicating to employees. Information that does not meet this criteria should be disseminated through other means.

2. Coordination of routine agency correspondence such as letters, directives, etc. that are normally treated as administrative products, regardless of whether they are coordinated on behalf of leadership. In similar vein, the OC internal communication initiative is not meant to be a substitute for appropriate subject matter expert coordination when one is seeking information on a specific issue.

3. A substitute for communicating with frontline supervisors. While the goal of the OC internal communication program is to facilitate two-way communication between agency leadership and employees, it is meant to complement, not take the place of processes already in place to communicate through the chain of command.

### **1690.3 - Policy**

1. Provide strategic and consistent communication between Forest Service leadership and employees on Agency policies, activities, and issues.
2. Share Agency-level information on critical and special interest issues as designated by Agency leadership.
3. Explore new methods of providing information.

### **1690.4 - Responsibility**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and other personnel authorized to act in an official capacity on behalf of the Agency for official Forest Service purposes.

#### **1690.41 - Washington Office**

##### **1690.41a - Washington Office Communication Director**

It is the responsibility of the Communication Director, or their designee, to:

1. Oversee the management, coordination, and dissemination of internal communication efforts and products produced under the purview of the Washington Office.
2. Provide Agency direction for efficient management of all internal communication efforts and products within Federal and USDA requirements.
3. Designate an Internal Communication Manager.
4. Approve applicable internal communication standards and policies that best represent the Forest Service communication goals.

5. Enforce established guidance on internal communication methodology to ensure it meets the strategic communication needs of the Forest Service.
6. Provide guidance and review of all e-mails labeled as "All FS" sent from Forest Service leadership, prior to dissemination.

#### **1690.41b - Internal Communication Manager, Office of Communication**

The Internal Communication Manager is the lead point of contact for all internal communication efforts initiated by the Washington Office. The Internal Communication Officer has the responsibility for the day-to-day management, coordination and execution of all internal communication efforts to include:

1. Provide general oversight and coordination of efforts within the Washington Office.
2. Review and ensure the quality and effectiveness of internal communication products generated within the Washington Office.

#### **1690.42 - Field Units**

##### **1690.42a - Regional Internal Communication Manager**

The Regional Internal Communications Manager also serves Research Stations, Forest Products Lab, International Institute of Tropical Forestry, and State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Internal Communication Manager or their designee, to:

1. Oversee the management, coordination, and dissemination of internal communication efforts and products produced under the purview of their respective Regional Forester, or equivalent.
2. Provide Regional direction for efficient management of all internal communication efforts and products for their region consistent with Federal and USDA requirements.
3. Approve applicable internal communication standards and regulations to best represent the Forest Service communication goals within their appropriate region.
4. Enforce established guidance on internal communication methodology to ensure strategic communication needs of the Forest Service are met.
5. Review and approve products intended for internal communication use within their specific region. These products include but are not limited to newsletters, internal websites, printed or digital materials, e-mails, and so forth.

## **1690.42b - Forest Internal Communication Managers**

It is the responsibility of Forest Internal Communication Managers to plan for any internal communication efforts that are needed on their respective Forests, to arrange for technical review of any required internal communication products, and to distribute said products through various methods of distributions to users as needed in a timely manner.

## **1691 - Internal Communication Methods**

### **1691.1 - Inside the Forest Service**

Inside the Forest Service is an external facing and online, internal communication product. Inside the Forest Service aligns internal communication efforts to Agency goals and demonstrates how employee's and stakeholder's work is connected to the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan. The intended audience is Forest Service employees and stakeholders.

#### **1691.1a - Inside the Forest Service - Article Submissions**

1. Submit timely articles: Events discussed as part of the submission must be no more than 2 weeks old from submission date.
2. Think ahead: Submit information before events happen.
3. When crafting submission, use the five "Ws" of journalism: who, what, when, where, why (or how).
4. Think macro rather than micro: Ensure submissions takes a broad view of activities.
5. Connect submissions to the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan and mission.
6. Use plain language.
7. Follow submission length and format guides:
  - a. Tell your story, but be succinct.
  - b. Use the inverted pyramid approach: Place important information first.
  - c. Keep submission lengths between 150 and 300 words.
8. Don't use acronyms on first reference unless approved by Associated Press style.
9. Include a visual element when possible (photo, graphic, video).
10. Link back to the appropriate Forest Service webpage when appropriate.



### **1691.1b - Inside the Forest Service - Photo and Video Standards**

See FSM 1640 for all photo and video submissions requirements. All photo and/or video submissions must adhere to the standards delineated in that document.

### **1691.2 - Internal Web Discussion Forums**

Internal Web discussion forums allow agency leaders to engage employees through topical discussion posts.

### **1691.3 - E-mail Communication**

E-mail provides the means to efficiently disseminate information to employees throughout the Agency. As appropriate, “All FS” emails from the Chief can be disseminated to share issues/information/thoughts that he or she deems valuable to the entire organization.

Approval for “All FS” e-mails must be granted by the Washington Office, Communication Director, or the Internal Communication Manager.

### **1691.4 - Leadership Town Halls**

Leadership Town Halls are an internal facing communication product. Leadership Town Halls allow Leadership to communicate directly with employees and align national priorities with agency and departmental strategic goals. The intended audience is Forest Service employees.

### **1691.5 - Chief Speeches**

The Chief’s speeches cover issues and policy affecting Forest Service employees, partners, stakeholders, and volunteers.

### **1691.6 - Printed Materials**

See FSM 1630 for requirements related to review, clearance, approval, and printing of publications and administrative documents.

### **1691.7 - Forest Service Intranet**

The Forest Service Intranet website is an internal-facing internal communication product. It serves as a one-stop-shop for internal agency-wide company product covering several areas:

- Human Resources (HR) and financial support
- IT Support
- Organizational information
- Highlighted / seasonal information
- Other items complementing the mission of the Forest Service

The intended audience is current Forest Service employees.

See FMS 1660.32a for consistent design and content standards.

#### **1691.8 - Digital Media**

See FSM 1660 for requirements related to review, clearance, and approval of any and all digital media products.

#### **1691.9 - Other Methods of Communication**

Use fact sheets, infographics, briefing papers, and other communication methods as appropriate for internal communication purposes.