

**Forest Service Handbook  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
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**Forest Service Handbook 7309.11 – Buildings and Related Facilities Handbook  
Chapter 50 - Special-Use Facilities**

**Amendment:** 7309.11-1995-12

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**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Superseded Directive:** 7309.11,50 Amendment 7309.11-1991-3

**Approved by:** Jack Ward Thomas, Chief

**Date approved:**

**Responsible Staff:**

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

**53:** Incorporates direction previously in interim directive No. 7309.11-94-6 which adds a cross-reference to special use facilities requirements and a requirement to monitor access to permittee facilities.

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This chapter gives direction on procedures for providing engineering support to authorized officers of the Forest Service who are delegated the responsibility to evaluate special-use proposals for buildings and related facilities and who have the responsibility for administering special uses.

## **50.2 - Objective**

The aim of providing architectural and engineering support is to ensure competent and effective technical decisions and actions by authorized officers in their evaluation and administration of special-use authorizations involving buildings and related facilities. Such support also provides the means of ensuring that authorization holders' proposals and actions comply substantially with authorization terms.

## **50.4 - Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and Director of the IITF to ensure the development of guidelines and procedures for applications, review, construction, and administration of buildings and related facilities as needed. (FSM 2720 and Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, section 251.50 (36 CFR 251.50)). For responsibilities of an authorized Forest Service Officer related to special-use facilities, see section 53.

## **52 - Authorization Holders**

Each special-use authorization holder is responsible for site design, construction, operation, maintenance, and inspection of authorized buildings and related facilities. This responsibility includes required architectural and engineering services.

## **53 - Authorized Officer**

The Forest Service fulfills its responsibility for special-use buildings and related facilities by the authorized officer's approval of applicant proposals, by monitoring construction, by monitoring user maintenance and operations, and by requiring inspection by qualified engineers or personnel from Federal, State, and local licensing authorities. Forest Service inspection and monitoring is limited to that which is necessary to ensure the authorized officer that user proposals, actions, and operations are in substantial compliance with applicable codes, standards, and other requirements.

The Forest Service maintains sufficient architectural and engineering expertise to carry out these policies and to communicate effectively with the owners, consultants, and other authorities with joint jurisdiction.

### **53.1 - Responsibilities of the Authorized Forest Service Officer**

It is the responsibility of the authorized Forest Service officer to:

1. Approve applicant and authorization holder proposals.

2. Obtain, through the engineering staff officer, professionally qualified architectural, engineering, and other assistance to evaluate technical adequacies of authorized facilities.

3. Evaluate and administer the special-use authorization or other instrument, including authorizing proposals for construction of buildings, structures, and related facilities and for the monitoring of their operation.

4. Ensure that proposals, facilities, and operations comply with standards and recommendations of environmental analyses.

5. Rely on local, county, State, or other agency inspections when they adequately safeguard public health and safety. Where these agencies are unable or unwilling to provide acceptable inspection services, the authorized officer shall request the applicant or holder to provide professional technical and administrative inspections.

6. Conduct operational monitoring as required by FSM 2700. Public service facilities may require more frequent inspection due to operational procedures and changing conditions.

7. Ensure that applicant's drawings and specifications for public use buildings comply with applicable national, State, and local codes. An architect or engineer licensed in the State where the site is located must prepare drawings and specifications for non-Forest Service buildings permitted on National Forest System land. The Regional Forester may waive this requirement for single-family, summer home cabins or minor buildings if plans are found by the Regional Forester to be otherwise competently prepared. See FSM 2340 and 2721 for requirements affecting development of recreation residence sites. Waivers of requirements may be redelegated.

8. Review drawings and specifications prepared by others for all buildings, utilities, and facilities having significant impact on the environment and/or public welfare. Verify that such proposals conform to code requirements and such size, height, materials, operational, and appearance criteria as the Regional Forester may establish. The design and construction of structures not covered by codes must conform with accepted practices of the engineering, architectural, and landscape architectural professions.

9. Guide planning by special-use applicants, as necessary, through the use of available studies, photos, and drawings of applicable facilities or by other graphical means. The Forest Service shall not perform architectural, engineering, or landscape architectural services for special-use authorization holders.

10. Monitor permittee compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ((29 U.S.C. 790-794) and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements (28 CFR, Part 36).

The Forest Service activities associated with special-use authorizations may involve considerable discussion and advice about planning, developing, and managing facilities. Consider early and continuing involvement of technical staff support personnel.