

PART 200—COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

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AUTHORITY: 24 U.S.C. 401, *et seq.*

SOURCE: 74 FR 57608, Nov. 9, 2009, unless otherwise noted.

§ 200.1 Purpose.

These regulations set out AFRH environmental policy and provide direction for carrying out the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related legal authorities.

§ 200.2 Background.

(a) The NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the procedural requirements of NEPA (40 CFR 1500 through 1508, hereinafter, the CEQ regulations) require that each Federal agency consider the impact of its actions on the human environment and prescribe procedures to be followed. Other laws, executive orders, and regulations provide related direction. NEPA establishes and AFRH adopts as policy that as a Federal agency, AFRH will: Use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate Federal plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the Nation may:

(1) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;

(2) Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;

(3) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;

(4) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice;

(5) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and

(6) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

(b) As an important means of carrying out this policy, AFRH will analyze and consider the impacts of its proposed actions (activities, programs, projects, legislation) and any reasonable alternatives on the environment, and on the relationship of people with the environment. This analysis is to be undertaken early in planning any such action, as an aid to deciding whether the action will go forward, and if so how. Consideration must be given to reasonable alternative means of achieving the purpose and need for the proposed action, and to the alternative of not taking the proposed action. The analysis is to be completed, and used to inform the decision maker and make the public aware of the action's potential impacts, before the decision is made about whether and how to proceed with the action. Relevant environmental documents, comments, and responses regarding the proposal will accompany the proposal and be presented to the AFRH decision maker for their consideration.

(c) NEPA also requires and AFRH will ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, analyses and consultations required by other environmental laws be coordinated with those required under NEPA, to reduce redundancy, paperwork, time, and cost.

(d) The AFRH is an independent Federal agency that provides residence and related services for certain retired and former members of the Armed Forces. The AFRH has property in Washington, DC and Gulfport, MS.

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(e) This part contains AFRH's general policy regarding NEPA implementation and sets out AFRH procedures that supplement the CEQ regulations for meeting NEPA requirements. It also assigns responsibilities to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the AFRH and the Master Planner. These regulations provide further detail regarding the conduct of NEPA impact analyses.

§ 200.3 Responsibilities.

(a) The COO is the AFRH NEPA official responsible for compliance with NEPA for AFRH actions. The COO also provides the AFRH's views on other agencies' environmental impact statements (EIS).

(b) The Master Planner is the point of contact for information on: AFRH NEPA documents; NEPA oversight activities; and review of other agencies' EISs and NEPA documents.

(c) The AFRH's assigned counsel is the point of contact for legal questions involving environmental matters.

§ 200.4 Implementation of NEPA and related authorities.

(a) *Classification of AFRH actions.* (1) All AFRH proposed actions typically fall into one of the following three classes, in terms of requirements for review under NEPA: Categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and environmental impact statements.

(2) The Master Planner, is responsible for classifying proposed actions and undertaking the level of analysis, consultation, and review appropriate to each.

(b) *Categorical Exclusions (CATEX).* (1) A categorical exclusion (CATEX) is a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment, except under extraordinary circumstances (42 CFR 1508.4). Because they lack the potential for effect, they do not require detailed analysis or documentation under NEPA.

(i) Determining when to use a CATEX (screening criteria). To use a CATEX, the proponent must satisfy the following three screening conditions:

(A) The action has not been segmented. Determine that the action has

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not been segmented to meet the definition of a CATEX. Segmentation can occur when an action is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. An action can be too narrowly defined, minimizing potential impacts in an effort to avoid a higher level of NEPA documentation. The scope of an action must include the consideration of connected, cumulative, and similar actions.

(B) No exceptional circumstances exist. Determine if the action involves extraordinary circumstances that would preclude the use of a CATEX (see paragraphs (b)(1)(ii)(A) through (xiv) of this section).

(C) One (or more) CATEX (See appendix A to part 200) encompasses the proposed action. Identify a CATEX (or multiple CATEXs) that potentially encompasses the proposed action. If no CATEX is appropriate, and the project is not exempted by statute or emergency provisions, an EA or an EIS must be prepared, before a proposed action may proceed.

(ii) Extraordinary circumstances that preclude the use of a CATEX are:

(A) Reasonable likelihood of significant effects on public health, safety, or the environment.

(B) Reasonable likelihood of significant environmental effects (direct, indirect, and cumulative).

(C) Imposition of uncertain or unique environmental risks.

(D) Greater scope or size than is normal for this category of action.

(E) Reportable releases of hazardous or toxic substances as specified in 40 CFR part 302.

(F) Releases of petroleum, oils, and lubricants, application of pesticides and herbicides, or where the proposed action results in the requirement to develop or amend a Spill Prevention, Control, or Countermeasures Plan.

(G) When a review of an action reveals that air emissions exceed de minimis levels or otherwise that a formal Clean Air Act conformity determination is required.

(H) Reasonable likelihood of violating any Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.