

## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE (MD)

MD 3.57	CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT	DT-16-46
<i>Volume 3, Part 2:</i>	Information Management Records Management	
<i>Approved By:</i>	Victor M. McCree Executive Director for Operations	
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<i>Issuing Office:</i>	Office of the Executive Director for Operations	
<i>Contact Name:</i>	Administrative and Correspondence Staff	
<p><b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Management Directive (MD) 3.57, “Correspondence Management,” has been updated to eliminate duplication and to ensure consistent guidance. MD Handbook 3.57 has been replaced with the following new correspondence guidance and references to existing Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0357, “Correspondence Management” (<a href="#">ML16173A109</a>);</li> <li>• 0370, “Setting Due Dates for EDO-Controlled Action Items and Requesting Extensions Transfers” (<a href="#">ML083020717</a>);</li> <li>• 0390, “OEDO Expectations for Signature Authority” (<a href="#">ML103570393</a>); and</li> <li>• 0440, “Congressional Correspondence Response Process” (<a href="#">ML110350594</a>).</li> </ul> <p>This change ensures that key procedures are located in one place and are easy to update. Refer to ADAMS package ML16173A119 for office concurrence and resolution of comments related to MD 3.57 and the related OEDO procedures.</p>		

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	POLICY .....	2
II.	OBJECTIVES .....	2
III.	ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY .....	3
	A. Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) .....	3
	B. Office of the General Counsel (OGC) .....	3

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For updates or revisions to policies contained in this MD that were issued after the MD was signed, please see the Yellow Announcement to Management Directive index ([YA-to-MD index](#)).

C. Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) .....	3
D. Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO).....	3
E. Office of the Secretary of the Commission (SECY).....	3
F. Office Directors and Regional Administrators .....	4
G. Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO), Administrative and Correspondence Staff (ACS) .....	5
H. Office of Administration (ADM), Division of Administrative Services (DAS) .....	5
I. Office of Administration (ADM), Division of Facilities and Security (DFS).....	5
J. Office or Regional Correspondence Officers.....	6
K. Correspondence Author.....	6
<b>IV. APPLICABILITY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>V. DIRECTIVE HANDBOOK .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VI. SIGNATORY RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VII. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>9</b>

## EXHIBIT

Exhibit	Signatories for NRC Correspondence .....	10
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### I. POLICY

The policy of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires that all official correspondence conforms to the policies, standards, and procedures of this directive and related Office of the Executive Director for Operations procedures.

### II. OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that staff writes correspondence in plain language, consistent with the NRC Plain Language Action Plan (available at <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/plain-writing.html>) and the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301), so that it is clear and concise.
- Establish procedures for preparing and handling NRC correspondence.
- Establish procedures for identifying by the source, subject matter, or sensitivity of incoming correspondence whether it requires expeditious handling as controlled correspondence.

- Produce correspondence that is uniform in style and format.
- Follow Federal and NRC policies and procedures for managing correspondence.

### **III. ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY**

#### **A. Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO)**

Oversees the Correspondence Management Program.

#### **B. Office of the General Counsel (OGC)**

Reviews correspondence and other communications referred to the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) by offices reporting to the Commission and to the Executive Director for Operations (EDO) for legal consideration.

#### **C. Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA)**

1. Reviews and concurs on all congressional correspondence prepared by NRC offices regarding communications from congressional sources, acknowledges their receipt, and provides guidance to offices assigned action, as necessary, on the nature of required responses.
2. Dispatches all mail addressed to Congress.
3. Monitors, as necessary, and concurs on all congressional-related Commission papers before they are distributed to the Commission.

#### **D. Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)**

1. Reviews Commission (Office of the Secretary of the Commission (SECY)) papers to ensure that any resource implications are appropriately addressed.
2. Reviews communication from congressional sources on budget and financial management matters and provides guidance to offices assigned action, as necessary, on the nature of required responses.

#### **E. Office of the Secretary of the Commission (SECY)**

1. Receives and reviews all communications addressed to the Chairman or the Commission and, upon request, communications addressed to individual Commissioners or offices that report directly to the Commission, assigning these communications action and suspense dates and tracking their status until they are complete.

2. Receives and reviews all communications addressed to SECY, assigning these communications action and suspense dates and tracking their status until complete.
3. Reviews and controls, as appropriate, staff correspondence prepared at the direction of the Commission.
4. Determines categories of incoming communications that warrant identification and ticketing as controlled correspondence, and functions as the central point-of-control for action assignments.
5. Coordinates controlled correspondence referrals to and from Commission-level offices and the Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO), and acts in direct liaison with those offices on related inquiries and status reporting.
6. Assigns suspense dates to controlled correspondence addressed to the Chairman, the Commission, the Secretary, and, upon request, individual Commissioners and, occasionally, to the EDO and OCA.
7. Advises the OEDO's Administrative and Correspondence Staff (ACS) of procedural or format changes requested by the Commission or otherwise warranted.
8. Reproduces and distributes all correspondence for the Commission.

**F. Office Directors and Regional Administrators**

1. Designate a correspondence officer from their organization to coordinate controlled correspondence actions and inform the OEDO of any redesignation of an officer.
2. Report to the OEDO, ACS, the name, location, telephone number, and e-mail address of the designated officer and promptly report any change to this information.
3. Ensure that the following controlled correspondence that originated in their organization is edited by a technical editor or correspondence officer:
  - (a) Correspondence going to, or responses being sent by, the Commission;
  - (b) Correspondence being signed or concurred on by the OEDO; and
  - (c) Other complex or sensitive correspondence at the discretion of the office director or the regional administrator.
4. Ensure that letters, memoranda, and other correspondence qualifying as official agency records (OARs) are saved in the appropriate recordkeeping system, such as the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS).

5. Ensure that all OARs are profiled and declared in ADAMS in accordance with the ADAMS Navigator User Manual.
6. Ensure that their staff implement this directive and OEDO Procedure 0357, "Correspondence Management," within their areas of responsibility.
7. Ensure that the originator has appropriately indicated the sensitivity of the correspondence and whether it is to be made available to the public, and that it is appropriately marked.
8. Ensure that the correspondence produced under their purview is accurate and well-written.

**G. Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO), Administrative and Correspondence Staff (ACS)**

1. Develops procedures for handling principal correspondence to supplement and expand on this directive.
2. Verifies that offices and divisions under the EDO's purview comply with OEDO's procedures.
3. Tracks correspondence under the EDO's purview and assigns OEDO due dates.
4. Determines and stipulates, in coordination with SECY, requirements and procedures for processing correspondence.
5. Reviews and processes all communications addressed or referred to OEDO.
6. Determines those categories of incoming communications that warrant identification as controlled correspondence.
7. Functions as the central point-of-control for action assignments within OEDO and for all offices and regions that report to the EDO.
8. Coordinates correspondence referrals to and from SECY and acts as direct liaison with SECY on related inquiries and status reporting.

**H. Office of Administration (ADM), Division of Administrative Services (DAS)**

Provides technical editing services for the agency's correspondence.

**I. Office of Administration (ADM), Division of Facilities and Security (DFS)**

Establishes and monitors security requirements for the receipt, handling, control, and transmission of classified correspondence. Monitors compliance with security requirements for sensitive unclassified correspondence.

**J. Office or Regional Correspondence Officers**

Office or regional correspondence officers handling EDO-referred correspondence perform the following functions:

1. Establish a system to ensure that correspondence is answered by the due date (that is, the suspense date established by either the correspondence officer's office or region, SECY, or OEDO).
2. Ensure that the due date allows adequate time to prepare the reply and obtain necessary concurrences, and, at the earliest indication that the due date cannot be met, the staff should follow procedures to request an extension. Offices reporting to the EDO should coordinate any change with the OEDO ACS staff, who will inform the SECY staff for Commission-controlled correspondence. Submit extension requests through OEDO STAR. For specific instructions, see the OEDO Extension Request Process in [OEDO Procedure 0370](#), "Setting Due Dates for EDO-Controlled Action Items and Requesting Extensions Transfers."
3. Remind staff who are responsible for the due dates for each response, usually about 5 workdays before the due date, or more frequently, as necessary.
4. Provide taskings to appropriate staff in a timely manner. (The expectation under normal circumstances is within 4 hours of receipt.)

**K. Correspondence Author**

1. The correspondence author is responsible for ensuring that correspondence is—
  - (a) Appropriate for its purpose,
  - (b) Accurate and concise,
  - (c) Clear to the intended audience,
  - (d) Compliant with agency policy on preparation of ADAMS Document Submission NRC Form(s), and
  - (e) Appropriately handled throughout the concurrence process.
2. To ensure appropriateness, the originator—
  - (a) Determines, in conjunction with management, the type of correspondence to use;
  - (b) Identifies any questions in incoming correspondence to answer;
  - (c) Determines the topics to discuss in a reply;
  - (d) Identifies the office staff with the expertise to answer the questions or address the concerns in the incoming correspondence; and

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- (e) Adequately and concisely answers the questions and addresses the concerns in the incoming correspondence.
3. To ensure clarity, the originator ensures that the correspondence—
- (a) Is written in plain language consistent with Federal and NRC's Plain Language guidance (available on the NRC internal and external Web sites);
  - (b) Is edited by a technical editor or the office correspondence officer;
  - (c) Is complete, clear, concise, and easy to read;
  - (d) Minimizes the use of technical terminology unless all recipients would understand; and
  - (e) Spells out acronyms (titles, organizations, and other abbreviations) when first used.
4. To ensure compliance with correspondence policy, the originator completes the appropriate ADAMS form(s) and ensures that correspondence involving classified and sensitive unclassified information is prepared, marked, cleared, and protected as prescribed in—
- (a) MD 12.2, "NRC Classified Information Security Program";
  - (b) MD 12.6, "NRC Sensitive Unclassified Information Security Program";
  - (c) MD 12.7, "NRC Safeguards Information Security Program";
  - (d) NRC Yellow Announcement YA-05-0077, "Policy Revision: NRC Policy and Procedures for Handling, Marking, and Protecting Sensitive Unclassified Non-Safeguards Information (SUNSI)," October 26, 2005 (ADAMS Accession No. ML051220278); and
  - (e) The "NRC Policy and Procedures for Handling, Marking, and Protecting Sensitive Unclassified Non-Safeguards Information (SUNSI)," available on the internal NRC Security Web site at <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/sunsi/>.
5. To ensure appropriate handling during the correspondence process, the originator—
- (a) Informs involved managers who promptly inform OEDO staff, as appropriate, if any office staff state that their concurrence will be delayed; and
  - (b) Concurs and obtains concurrence from each contributing office and the following offices on the final version of the correspondence, as required:
    - (i) OGC, for correspondence that involves legal issues or regulatory interpretation or that is prepared for the Chairman's signature;

- (ii) The originator's office director or regional administrator, for correspondence prepared for the EDO and/or Deputy Executive Director for Operations (DEDO) signature;
  - (iii) OEDO, for those documents being signed or concurred in by the EDO and/or DEDO; and
  - (iv) OCFO, for correspondence involving the budget, financial management, or resource impacts.
6. If the EDO assigns correspondence that requires OCA review, it is the responsibility of the assigned office to obtain OCA's concurrence.

#### **IV. APPLICABILITY**

The provisions of this directive apply to all NRC headquarters and regional office employees except the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and NRC boards and advisory committees that report directly to the Commission.

#### **V. DIRECTIVE HANDBOOK**

Handbook 3.57 is replaced by the following Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) procedures:

- 1. 0357, "Correspondence Management" ([ML16173A109](#));
- 2. 0370, "Setting Due Dates for EDO-Controlled Action Items and Requesting Extensions Transfers" ([ML083020717](#));
- 3. 0390, "OEDO Expectations for Signature Authority" ([ML103570393](#)); and
- 4. 0440, "Congressional Correspondence Response Process" ([ML110350594](#)).

#### **VI. SIGNATORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities listed in this section apply to all types of correspondence unless otherwise indicated. Signature responsibility for the various types of correspondence is set forth in Exhibit 1, "Signatory Responsibilities," of this directive.

- A.** Signatories (those who sign the correspondence) are responsible for content.
- B.** The office director or regional administrator originating the correspondence to be signed by the EDO, the Chairman, or a Commissioner, should agree with the content and be satisfied that the content is both accurate and consistent with program and agency policy before signing.



- C. Correspondence to Congress requires the signature level of the Chairman, a Commissioner, the EDO, or a Commission-level office director.

## VII. REFERENCES

ADAMS Navigator User Manual, June 2016, available at <http://www.internal.nrc.gov/ois/ECM/ADAMS/adams-navigator/>.

Management Directives—

12.2, “NRC Classified Information Security Program.”

12.6, “NRC Sensitive Unclassified Information Security Program.”

12.7, “NRC Safeguards Information Security Program.”

Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO) Procedures, available at <http://fusion.nrc.gov/edo/team/Lists/OEDO%20Procedures/Type%20View.aspx>—

0357, “Correspondence Management” ([ML16173A109](#)).

0370, “Setting Due Dates for EDO-Controlled Action Items and Requesting Extensions Transfers” ([ML083020717](#)).

0390, “OEDO Expectations for Signature Authority” ([ML103570393](#)).

0440, “Congressional Correspondence Response Process” ([ML110350594](#)).

Web Sites—

NRC Plain Language Action Plan Web Site:  
<http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/open/plain-writing.html>.

NRC Policies and Procedures for Handling, Marking, and Protecting Sensitive Unclassified Non-Safeguards Information (SUNSI):  
<http://www.internal.nrc.gov/sunsi/>.

Yellow Announcement YA-05-0077, “Policy Revision: NRC Policy and Procedures for Handling, Marking, and Protecting Sensitive Unclassified Non-Safeguards Information (SUNSI),” October 26, 2005 ([ML051220278](#)).

United States Code

Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301).

**EXHIBIT****Exhibit      Signatories for NRC Correspondence**

<b>Signatory</b>	<b>Type of Correspondence</b>
Chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence addressed to the Chairman or the Commission from a member of Congress</li> <li>• Response to correspondence from a cabinet officer or the head of a Government agency or Commission</li> <li>• Response to correspondence from a high-ranking official of a foreign government agency or commission</li> <li>• Response to correspondence from a major official of a State Government or domestic organization</li> <li>• Response to correspondence soliciting the NRC's position on a substantive matter or requesting establishment of a policy, a legislative position, or budgetary requirements</li> </ul>
Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence addressed to a specific Commissioner is prepared for that Commissioner's signature unless otherwise directed</li> </ul>
Office of the Secretary (SECY) of the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SECY acknowledges all correspondence designated for reply, including correspondence from the White House, Heads of State, Congress, and State, local, and Tribal governments</li> </ul>
Executive Director for Operations (EDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence addressed to the EDO unless the response establishes a policy, a legislative position, or budgetary requirements that require the Chairman's signature</li> <li>• Response to correspondence from a member of Congress assigned to the EDO or a member of the EDO's staff</li> <li>• Commission papers prepared by offices reporting to the EDO</li> <li>• Memoranda to the Commission prepared by offices reporting to the EDO</li> </ul>

<b>Signatory</b>	<b>Type of Correspondence</b>
Directors of offices reporting directly to the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence addressed to an office director unless the response establishes a policy, a legislative position, or budgetary requirements that require the Chairman's signature</li> <li>• Commission papers prepared by offices reporting to the Commission</li> <li>• Memoranda to the Commission prepared by offices reporting to the Commission</li> <li>• Response to correspondence from a member of Congress assigned to Commission-level office</li> </ul>
Director, Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence from a member of Congress (acknowledge within 3 days of receipt)</li> <li>• Response to correspondence addressed to OCA, except when the response establishes a policy, a legislative position, or budgetary requirements that require the Chairman's signature</li> </ul>
Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence from State and local government officials and Indian Tribe representatives, unless the response establishes a policy, a legislative position, or budgetary requirements that require the Chairman's signature (acknowledge within 3 days of receipt )</li> </ul>
Directors of all other offices not otherwise specified in this table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence from external sources, such as official State, local, or other related organizations</li> </ul>
Regional Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence to the administrators from external sources, such as official State, local, Tribal or other related organizations</li> </ul>
Division Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence of a routine nature received from external sources as assigned by an office director or a regional administrator</li> </ul>
Branch Chiefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to correspondence of a routine nature received from external sources as assigned by an office director or a regional administrator</li> </ul>
Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence of a routine nature</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence of a routine nature</li> </ul>