

## SECTION 3-1: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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### 3-1-00 POLICY

The Department of Health and Human Services is committed to complying with all applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws, statutes, and regulations; protecting the environment; and conserving our environmental resources by being proactive and cost effective in our environmental stewardship. It is HHS policy that pollution be prevented or reduced at the source. All HHS organizations shall give first priority to avoiding or reducing the generation of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants at the source. Pollution and hazardous wastes that cannot be prevented or recycled must be treated in an environmentally safe manner to reduce volume, toxicity, and/or mobility. Only as a last resort should disposal or other release into the environment be considered and employed. Such disposal or release must be conducted in accordance with all applicable authorities and in an environmentally safe manner. Managers and employees are expected to execute their responsibilities in a way that is proactive and cost effective in the protection and conservation of our environmental resources and in a manner that complies with all applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

### 3-1-10 PROCEDURES

#### A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of HHS environmental efforts are to prevent harm to the environment and enhance the quality of human health by conserving our environmental resources. These goals are satisfied by meeting the following objectives:

Compliance - To comply with all applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws, statutes, and regulations;

Conservation - To protect and conserve our environmental resources through pollution prevention and hazardous waste minimization through waste reduction and recycling;

Pollution Prevention - To protect and conserve our environmental resources through source reduction in facility management and acquisition practices, where practicable, as a primary means of achieving and maintaining compliance with applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws, statutes, and regulations; and

Restoration - To repair damage to a site caused by human activity, industry, or natural disasters to restore the site as closely as possible to its natural condition before it was disturbed

#### B. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)

In addition to what is contained in GAM 30, landholding OPDIVS are required to develop an EMS where required by Executive Order 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*. An EMS is a business management practice that allows an organization to systematically

manage and improve its environmental program. Implementation reflects accepted quality management principles based on the “Plan, Do, Check, Act,” model using a standard process to identify goals, establish supporting procedures, review progress, and make adjustments to ensure continual improvement.

Elements of an EMS include:

- Developing a policy endorsed by top management stating the organization’s environmental commitments.
- Identifying significant environmental aspects (*i.e.*, organizational activities that impact or potentially impact the environment).
- Establishing objectives and targets to reduce these aspects/impacts and improve the overall system.
- Developing programs and procedures to support the organization in meeting those targets and objectives.
- Engaging top-level management in reviewing implementation and progress to identify areas for improvement.

#### 3-1-20 GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

See the [HHS GAM, Part 30—Environmental Protection—February 2000](#), for additional guidance and information.

Contractors. All OPDIVs shall provide, in all future contracts between the organization and its relevant contractors, for the contractor to supply all information the OPDIV deems necessary for it to comply with this requirement. In addition, to the extent that compliance with any environmental law, regulation, and/or Executive Order is made more difficult due to lack of information from existing contractors, an OPDIV shall take practical steps to obtain the information from such contractors that is needed to comply.