

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA Administrative Order <u>200-3</u>	
NOAA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SERIES	DATE OF ISSUANCE	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>AUG 27 2008</b>
SUBJECT <u>THE NOAA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SERIES</u>		
<p><u>SECTION 1. PURPOSE.</u></p> <p>.01 This Order describes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrative Order (NAO) series, establishes policy, and assigns responsibilities for the series' management and operation.</p> <p>.02 This is a complete revision and update to the Order. The significant changes in this Order: discontinues hard-copy reproduction and distribution of NOAA Administrative Orders; changes purpose of the NAO series to focus primarily on policies and responsibilities (inclusion of procedures and guidance is discouraged); establishes the Deputy Under Secretary as the NOAA official responsible for determining outcome of irreconcilable differences in proposed NAOs; prescribes additional responsibilities of the originating offices for NOAA handbooks and manuals; establishes the Administrative Issuances Staff (AIS) as the organization responsible for administrative aspects of the NAO series; eliminates the requirement for conducting informal clearance with the Administrative Support Centers; adds a requirement for certification of each NAO's accuracy and completeness every three years; and eliminates the requirement for formal clearance with Departmental offices and replaces it with a recommendation that originating offices conduct informal counterpart clearance.</p> <p><u>SECTION 2. SCOPE.</u></p> <p>The NAO series covers substantive program matters and administrative management policy, responsibilities, and requirements for such administrative subjects as budget, travel, personnel, procurement, etc. The series covers administrative subject matter of a continuing nature applicable NOAA-wide or to two or more Line or Staff Offices. The NAO series also may be used to address certain program matters applicable to two or more Line and/or Staff Offices.</p> <p><u>SECTION 3. RESPONSIBILITIES.</u></p> <p>.01 <u>The Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere</u> ("the Under Secretary") shall sign all NAOs dealing with authorities vested in the Under Secretary that have not been delegated and other NAOs which the NOAA Chief Administrative Officer forwards for signature.</p>		

.02 The NOAA Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) shall sign all other NAOs and either directly or indirectly through staff:

- a. exercise top management oversight of the NAO series;
- b. take appropriate measures to promote and maintain compliance with the policies prescribed in this Order; and
- c. develop procedures and protocols applicable to the series.

.03 The Deputy Under Secretary (DUS) for Oceans and Atmosphere shall resolve irreconcilable differences between Line and/or Staff Offices concerning the NAO series.

.04 Heads of NOAA Line Offices and Staff Offices shall:

- a. concur on proposed NAOs, revisions, and revocations developed by their respective organizations, and on their respective organization's proposed establishment, revocation, or potentially controversial revisions to its authorized NOAA handbook and/or manual issuances; and
- b. elevate to the DUS clearance issues involving the Office's NAOs or NOAA handbook and manual issuances on which concurrence cannot be obtained from another Office during the informal clearance process.

.05 The Office of Primary Interest (OPI), also referred to as the "originator" or the "originating organization" within this Order, is the organization responsible for preparing and maintaining the NAO and having the expertise to answer questions regarding its provisions or subject matter. When warranted, two organizations having significant responsibilities for a single NAO may both be listed as OPI. The OPI shall:

- a. develop and maintain clear, current, and accurate NAOs covering appropriate administrative or programmatic subject matter applicable to two or more Line and/or Staff Offices;
- b. review the content of their NAOs for accuracy and completeness every three years, or as otherwise scheduled by the CAO, and either initiate appropriate revisions or provide confirmation to AIS that the material remains current;
- c. provide internal organizations, including headquarters and field elements, with the opportunity to review and comment during the developmental stages of the Office's NAOs;
- d. conduct informal clearance with external Line and Staff Offices and other headquarters organizations that may be significantly impacted by proposed additions, revisions, or revocations to the NAO series, ensure that all substantive issues have been addressed, and obtain concurrence from organizations prior to submitting the document for formal clearance;

e. consider and, as appropriate, conduct informal clearance with counterpart organization(s) within the Department of Commerce (a request for “courtesy review” may be an alternative to informal clearance); and

f. comply with additional requirements in Section 4.03 of this Order concerning NOAA handbooks and manuals, including that for issuance of an authorizing NAO for the handbook/manual.

.06 The Administrative Issuances Staff (AIS) shall:

a. establish and coordinate the overall operation of the NAO series;

b. control and assign subject classification numbers for NAOs;

c. plan, establish, and maintain a centralized control system for the formal clearance and issuance of NAOs;

d. establish and apply editorial standards and protocols for format, masthead, and appearance;

e. advise the CAO of serious violations and/or consistent patterns of noncompliance with applicable guidelines and policies for the NAO series;

f. maintain the official historical master files for NAOs other than NOAA handbook and manual issuances; and

g. maintain the NAO website.

SECTION 4. GENERAL.

.01 NAO Website. AIS will maintain a website comprising electronic versions of all active NAOs. NOAA handbooks and manuals also will be identified and, as available, accessible through the NAO website.

.02 Identification of Updates. Recent additions, revisions, or amendments to the NAO series will be identified and highlighted on the NAO website to draw the attention of website visitor. Revocation Notices will be posted for a brief period and also will be highlighted.

.03 NOAA Handbooks and Manuals.

a. NOAA handbooks and manuals containing policy or procedures are elements of the NAO series providing in-depth coverage of those subjects so complex or extensive as to benefit from coverage in the form of a handbook or manual. NOAA handbooks and manuals cover specialized administrative requirements in areas such as travel management, procurement, budgeting, and finance.

b. NOAA handbooks and manuals establishing policy and responsibilities shall be authorized by an NAO and shall have the same force and effect as that NAO. The authorizing NAO shall specify the Office of Primary Interest (OPI), which, for purposes of NOAA handbooks and manuals, is the organization responsible for preparing, clearing, issuing, and maintaining the handbook or manual. Additional guidance on the content and subject matter to be covered in the authorizing NAO and the procedural aspects associated with NOAA handbooks and manuals is available from AIS.

c. The OPI for each NOAA handbook or manual is responsible for the following:

1. determining and providing for the method of issuance (i.e., hard-copy and/or electronic format);
2. assessing security and other access issues and implementing any necessary controls;
3. providing to AIS appropriate information for accessing the NOAA handbook or manual through the NAO website; and
4. maintaining the official historical files in accordance with the NOAA Records Disposition Handbook's Item 100-3a., Official Record Set, and Item 3c., Working papers and background materials.

## SECTION 5. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES.

NAOs must have uniformity of format and presentation, in addition to being complete, clear, technically accurate, and consistent with law and regulation. AIS has developed detailed guidance on formatting instructions, the basic structure, and other subjects associated with preparing NAOs. Originating offices should consult with AIS early in the writing process to obtain the current guidance information or if any other assistance is needed.

## SECTION 6. CLEARANCE PROCESS.

.01 Informal Clearance. The OPI shall conduct informal clearance with headquarters organizations, Line Offices, and Staff Offices that may be significantly impacted by proposed NAO documents. Substantive comments expressed during the informal clearance process must be incorporated, accommodated, or otherwise reconciled prior to the document's entry into formal clearance. The OPI shall obtain evidence of concurrence from the reviewers who have provided substantive comments.

- a. The originator shall provide the draft NAO to organizations that have a functional area interest or may be significantly impacted by the proposed NAO, for purposes of technical review and comment.
- b. The originator shall review all comments and incorporate or otherwise accommodate in a revised draft those substantive comments that are acceptable.

- c. If substantive comments are not acceptable to the originator, then the submitters of the rejected comments shall be informed and advised of the reason. If the commenter still disagrees, the originating office shall attempt to resolve the issue(s) and achieve concurrence.
- d. If resolution of a substantive issue(s) is not achieved, the matter shall be elevated to higher levels of authority within each organization so that they might attempt to resolve the matter. If substantive issues are not resolved at these higher levels, each organization must document its position. The originator will then prepare and forward a decision paper along with each party's documentation for consideration by the Deputy Under Secretary. The Deputy Under Secretary's determination shall be final and will be reflected in the version submitted for formal clearance.
- e. Originators also should consider conducting informal clearance with the appropriate counterpart organization(s) within the Department of Commerce (a request for "courtesy review" may be an alternative to informal clearance). Appropriate modifications should be made to the draft; however, because there is no requirement for counterpart review in NOAA's or the Department's Directives System, the originator has greater latitude in determining whether to seek review by, or to accept input from, the counterpart.
- f. The proposed Order must be provided to NOAA's Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation for review, and its concurrence is required prior to the document's entry into formal clearance.
- g. After all substantive issues have been resolved, the originator shall prepare the NAO, including exhibits, appendices, and attachments, in "final draft" form.

.02 Formal Clearance.

a. The OPI shall transmit the following items to AIS:

1. an electronic version of the proposed NAO prepared with NOAA's standard word processing software (currently Microsoft Word) for the textual matter and in PDF format for non-textual materials (e.g., forms, diagrams, or similar illustrative matter);

2. a brief "clearance paragraph" (in word processing format) stating:

(a) the purpose of the NAO;

(b) the name, organization (Line/Staff Office), and date of concurrence for each official involved in the informal clearance process, including mention of any review by a Department of Commerce counterpart organization;

(c) that all substantive issues identified through the informal review process have been resolved; and

(d) that the proposed NAO does not duplicate or contradict any existing NAO or DAO; and

3. information on the informal clearance's substantive issues and their resolution (a synopsis will suffice); and

4. a copy of any decision paper(s) conveying a determination made by the Deputy Under Secretary.

b. AIS will ensure the proposed NAO complies with all required format, grammar, and other protocols of this Order. AIS will advise the OPI if its evaluation indicates potential problems with subject matter coverage that might warrant further effort by the OPI.

c. AIS will prepare the clearance package containing the Clearance Sheet, the proposed NAO, and appropriate background materials. AIS will forward the clearance package to each official (other than those in NOAA Headquarters) listed on the Clearance Sheet and will monitor progress during the clearance process. Once non-headquarters clearance is completed, the package will be forwarded to NOAA's Executive Secretariat staff for NOAA Headquarters clearance and approving official's signature. Once the NAO has been approved, the signed original will be returned to AIS.

#### SECTION 7. ISSUANCE.

.01 Upon receipt of an approved NAO, AIS will issue the Order electronically by posting to the NAO website.

.02 The original signed version of the Order and other pertinent materials will be used to establish the official historical file.

#### SECTION 8. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES.

This Order supersedes NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 200-3, dated October 2, 1991.



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Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere

Office of Primary Interest:  
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer  
Administrative Issuances Staff