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GENERAL PROCEDURAL POLICIES

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CONSULTATIVE REVIEWS AND OPINIONS

Internal consultative reviews and opinions are frequently required for answering correspondence, case reviews, petition reviews, and similar actions. Such consultative requests should be routed through normal first-line supervisory channels and through Division Directors unless direct routing is authorized by the designated managers. The levels may be elevated if designated by the appropriate Office Director. Direct referrals may be made by staff people if authorized by their supervisors. Appropriate product or project officers should be kept informed in accordance with outstanding instructions.

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this guide is to outline the procedures to follow in requesting internal consultative reviews and opinions.

2. **Procedures:**

- a. Individuals preparing consultative reviews or opinions must assure that their conclusions conform to existing guidelines and policies and parallel previous conclusions in like situations where all basic factors are identical or similar. Any deviation from existing policies or guidelines must be explained and justified.
- b. It is important to determine if new data or information exists which would alter previous conclusions and opinions. Revised or new conclusions and opinions require more comprehensive documentation in the administrative file than does reaffirmation of a previous opinion or conclusion. Simple reaffirmations should be expedited.
- c. All consultative reviews and opinions must be written. Return routes should be the same as those used to forward the request for consultative review.
- d. Prior consultative reviews and opinions may not ordinarily be relied upon for subsequent similar actions without the reaffirmation of the issuing office. However, when repetitive actions requiring consultative reviews occur or are expected to occur over a short period of time, routine reviews and opinions may

be negotiated between the involved units. Such routine responses must be reassessed at intervals established by the units rendering the opinions or conclusions. From time to time, more specific guidelines within the context of the CVM policy and procedure may be issued by Division and Office Directors of the Center.