

FDA STAFF MANUAL GUIDES, VOLUME III - GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

FDA HEADQUARTERS COMMUNICATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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1. PURPOSE

This Guide is to provide information and guidance to all FDA Headquarters units relative to the methods of communication established by ORO/DFSR for the dissemination of information to State and local governments. (See Attachment A)

2. REFERENCE

Staff Manual Guide FDA 1293.1

3. POLICY

The Food and Drug Administration maintains a system of information dissemination which coordinates and provides for the distribution of administrative, scientific, technical, and legal information from FDA Headquarters to State and local government officials.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the organization, development, implementation, and coordination of the Food and Drug Administration Headquarters program to State and local officials is assigned to the Office of Regional Operations, Director of the Division Or Federal-State Relations, State Services Branch (HFO-310).

5. ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Upon request, the State Services Branch DF SR, will provide advice and assistance to FDA Headquarters components in arranging priority, quantities, etc., of information for distribution to State and local officials. DF SR will transmit the information to State and local officials by the most appropriate communication mode defined in Attachment A.

6. USE OF COMMUNICATION MODES

- A. These communication modes are available for use by all Headquarters components through DF SR/ORO for all general distribution of information to State and local governments.
- B. The Director, Division of Federal-State Relations shall manage each mode and serve as the liaison manager between the FDA Headquarters components and State and local units of government.
- C. To assure uniformity, coordination, and that specific information is directed to the appropriate State Official or agency, the distribution of information from Headquarters units shall be conducted by DF SR.
- D. The communication system and its modes are designed to serve the Agency. All Headquarters components are encouraged to make use of it in the manner described in this guide

ATTACHMENT A

ORO/DFSR COMMUNICATION MODES FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The communication modes described below were developed and are being used by the Director of the Division of Federal-State Relations, ORO, to appropriately relay information to State and local governments, based on urgency of the problem or potential problems.

There are three basic communications modes:

1. Telecommunications - used to convey information on real or potential health hazard situations.
2. Keyed DFSR Mailing - used to convey bulk information material in most expedient manner.
3. Keyed HHS Mailing - used to convey general information where time is not a critical factor.

The following description of the above modes is intended to give basic information on characteristics, scope, capabilities, etc., of each mode so Headquarters components will be aware of the possible use of these modes to relay information to or from State and local governments as their program needs may dictate.

Telecommunications (Two-Way Transmission)

FDA is financially supporting the location and operation of two-way telecommunication terminal equipment in selected agencies in all fifty States.

The teletype network provides direct two-way contact between each State and FDA Headquarters and between States and the FDA Field Office serving their area. The teletype network is identified by the acronym NRSTEN (National /Regional/ State Telecommunication Exchange Network).

NRSTEN operates as follows:

1. The major food and drug regulatory agency in each State was selected as the agency to house and operate the terminal equipment. The State terminal agency plus agencies in the State that have other food and drug regulatory responsibilities have developed a terminal-sharing plan.
2. FDA messages going to the State terminals are distributed among the State agencies in accordance with a distribution code developed by DFSR, which directs the message to the appropriate State agency. All State agencies having food and drug related programs can transmit

ATTACHMENT A

messages to FDA Headquarters or field offices from the State terminal by provisions arranged in the State terminal-sharing plan.

3. Through the assignment of appropriate routing indicator codes, FDA Headquarters and Field Offices can communicate with an individual State, any combination of States, or with all State terminals at the same time.
4. The system cannot be used for State-To-State transmissions.

Telecommunications (One-Way Transmission)

Forty-three major metropolitan health agencies and thirty-seven major poison control centers are receiving overnight MCI Mail from Headquarters. The addresses do not have teletype equipment or compatible equipment; therefore, do not have return telecommunications to FDA.

Keyed DFSS Mailing

The DFSS maintains a State directory of all State food and drug program officials and all food and drug program organizational entities. First-class mailing is keyed on fifteen separate direct mailing lists. The addresses are placed on categorical lists according to positions relating to specific program areas. The mailings are prepared in DFSS, including stuffing and addressing envelopes. The material is sent first-class mail and is used when the fastest mailing of material is desired.

Keyed HHS Mailing

General mailing keys are maintained for twenty-one separate categorical lists. Information is mailed through the HHS Central Mailing System. This mode is the slowest method of distribution and is used for general information where time is not critical factor.