

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Little Rock District, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 867
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-0867

Regulation
No. 1-1-3

1 November 1996

Administration

PREPARATION OF STAFF ACTION PAPERS FOR THE COMMANDER

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1. Purpose. To provide guidance for the preparation and the processing of staff action papers (e.g., information memorandums, fact sheets, decision papers, etc.) for the District Engineer's information or action.
2. Applicability. This regulation applies to all Staff Officers and employees assigned Action Officer responsibilities.
3. Policy and Responsibilities. It is essential that the District Engineer receive timely, accurate, and succinct information to support command actions and decisions. The fulfillment of this requirement is the responsibility of Staff Officers and assigned Action Officers. These Officers will ensure that documents submitted to the District Engineer for information or action (e.g., decision, signature, etc.) are fully coordinated with all organizations having an interest and comply with the format and preparation guidelines provided by this regulation, AR 25-50 (Preparing and Managing Correspondence), and subject matter or related documents.
4. Staff Action Products. Staff actions requiring written communication to the District Engineer will normally fall into one of the three documentation types which are defined below and further explained in the Appendixes.

a. Fact Sheet. This document type is sometimes used interchangeably with the information memorandum. Fact sheets are short, concise, usually one page, highlighting a single topic. They are used to update new facts or provide the status of a topic, program, or action. Sentence structure is short, clear, concise, and highlights the individual facts within the topic. These papers should state coordination when the subject matter crosses organizational lines. This assures the reader that affected offices are aware of the topic and content. Staff disagreements and resolution actions should also be included. See Appendix A for format and examples.

b. Information Memorandum. Often referred to as the formalized fact sheet, the purpose of the information memorandum is to provide information or advice about an event, subject, situation, issue, or problem. It may include a recommendation, but is never used for actions requiring a decision. The format is that of an informal memorandum. The paragraph structures after the introductory "Purpose" paragraph are flexible and may be adjusted to fit the type of information presented. See Appendix B for examples.

c. Decision Memorandum. A Decision Memorandum is prepared when developing a staff action requiring the decision, action, or signature of the District Engineer. Its purpose is to quickly focus the decision maker's attention on the important reasons and factors supporting the action and to allow a rapid focus on the recommendation and action to be taken. Any documentation required to implement the recommendation is usually attached for the District Engineer's signature (e.g., regulation, contract, memorandum of agreement, etc.). Format and examples are provided at Appendix C.



P.S. MORRIS
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

DISTRIBUTION A

APPENDIX A

Fact Sheet

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

DATE

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Preparation of a Fact Sheet

FACTS:

1. Facts should be supportable statements and not assumptions, opinions, or conclusions.
2. Facts should be clear and concise and presented in a logical sequence for smooth reading.
3. If possible, limit the paper to one page.
4. Any coordination should be indicated. Dual office symbols maybe used to indicate joint proponents of the fact sheet.

/s/

NAME/TELEPHONE EXTENSION

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

DATE

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Preparation of a Fact Sheet

FACTS:

- o Facts sheets can be structured using a variety of formats.
- o Numeric (1, 2, etc.) or alphabetic (A, B, etc.)
- o Dashes (-)
- o Small letter "o"

AND

1. Purpose. Fact sheets may contain a "Purpose" paragraph as the first paragraph.
 - a. Subparagraphs may be used.
 - b. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
2. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

AND

- Fact sheets are very useful.
 - To support a view.
 - To refute opposition.
 - To state a new position.
 - Solely to inform.

/s/

NAME/TELEPHONE EXTENSION

APPENDIX B
Information Memorandum

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SUBJECT: Preparation of an Information Memorandum

1. Purpose. Clearly state the reason for this memorandum in infinitive form (e.g., "To inform..." "To advise...", or "To provide...").

2. Information.

a. Explain why the information is being provided and give background data concerning the issue, event, situation, or problem.

b. Use following subparagraphs to provide relevant information about the issue, situation, or problem.

c. Refer to enclosures to provide additional details as required and identify them as Tab A, Tab B, etc.

3. Coordination. Obtain and show coordination if the information impacts others.

CESWL-XX (concur or nonconcur) Name/Tel. Ext.

CESWL-ZZ (concur or nonconcur) Name/Tel. Ext.

/s/

NAME

ORGANIZATION or POSITION TITLE

TELEPHONE EXTENSION

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SUBJECT: Optional Information Memorandum Format

1. Purpose. To show Information Memorandum format that allows the writer to use optional paragraph headings to fit the information being provided. The titles of the following paragraphs are optional and should be titled to fit the writer's needs.
2. Points of Major Interest. Use to list considerations or facts bearing on the subject.
3. Expected Developments. Summarize or list planned or expected outcomes, events, etc.
4. Conclusion. Provide a brief summary and state what action or position should be taken.

OR

2. Recommended Position. Use this format to list or identify a position.
3. Supporting Points. List or identify principal elements or rationale supporting the recommended position.
4. Other Views.
 - a. Describe arguments which might be used to counter the recommended position.
 - b. Identify organizations, agencies, individuals supporting the other views.

/s/

NAME
ORGANIZATION or POSITION TITLE
TELEPHONE EXTENSION

1 Nov 96

APPENDIX C

DECISION MEMORANDUM

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SUBJECT: Preparation of a Decision Memorandum

1. Purpose. The first paragraph explains the objective of the memorandum. It states in clear and precise terms what is being requested. For example: "To obtain the District Engineer's endorsement of subject regulation which establishes policy for obtaining decisions.

2. Background. The second paragraph is used to provide a short history of events or reasons a proposal has been developed and why a decision by the District Engineer is required.

3. Discussion. The next paragraph presents the facts, assumptions, pros and cons of various alternatives, addresses positions of nonconcurrence, and provides a conclusion. Lengthy documents (e.g., detailed explanations, fact sheets, data sheets, etc.) should be attached, tabbed as an enclosure, and referred to in the appropriate paragraphs of the memorandum. Appendix D provides guidance.

a. Additional subparagraphs are used as necessary to discuss the situation as necessary. Paragraphs 2 and 3 may be combined as appropriate.

b. A good Decision Memorandum is concise and provides a clear presentation of a definite problem leading to a sharply defined set of conclusions and recommendations. The discussion paragraphs should be brief and not overloaded with long explanations. Although one page is preferred, the memorandum should be limited to two pages reinforced by enclosures.

c. The memorandum will be prepared on plain bond paper and signed by the action officer. The signature block will contain the action officer's position title and telephone extension.

OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS #)

SUBJECT: Preparation of a Decision Memorandum

4. Impacts. This paragraph identifies significant impacts (e.g., manpower, resources, productivity, morale, avoidance of adverse publicity, etc.). If none, so state.

5. Recommendations. This paragraph will present the exact course of action being proposed for approval. Documentation required to implement the action should be attached in final form, if possible, for the District Engineer's review or signature as appropriate. See Appendix D for proper sequence of attachments.

6. Coordination. Coordinate with every office which has a stake-holder interest. Resolve disagreements if possible.

<u>Office Symbol</u>	<u>Concur/Nonconcur</u>	<u>Date</u>
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Enclosure(s)

/s/

NAME
ORGANIZATION or POSITION TITLE
TELEPHONE EXTENSION

APPENDIX D

Processing Procedures for Decision Memorandum

1. Coordination is a critical step when developing a proposal for the District Engineer's decision. Improper or incomplete coordination will only cause delay in implementing the action. Good coordination ensures that critical data, facts, or other information bearing directly on the action are not omitted from the decision making process.
2. The Action Officer will staff the decision memorandum simultaneously for review and comments to all offices having necessary involvement or interest including the Deputy Commander and Deputy District Engineer. To reduce paperwork, this review will be conducted via E-Mail whenever possible. Those offices will complete their review and provide their comments and concurrence or nonconcurrence back to the Action Officer. All nonconcurrences must provide a statement of what the exact requirements are to obtain a concurrence. If possible, all nonconcurrences will be resolved prior to forwarding to the District Engineer. Otherwise, the Action Officer will address the unresolved nonconcurrences in the Decision Memorandum.
3. The Action Officer will assemble the comments and prepare a decision memorandum with recommendations for the District Engineer's concurrence or nonconcurrence and signature as appropriate. All the appropriate enclosures will be provided in a tabbed format. Position each tab starting on the upper, right-hand side of a separate, blank sheet of paper. Space tabs along the right side so each can be easily seen going from top to bottom of the page.
 - a. The first tab for the document to be signed or approved (e.g., policy memorandum, regulation, etc.).
 - b. The second tab will be the document, if any, that started the action (e.g., the incoming correspondence, message, or tasking document).
 - c. Subsequent tabs should be used for backup information (staff comments, nonconcurrences, etc.).