In Reply Refer to:
1683 (OR-915) P

May 6, 2004

EMS TRANSMISSION  05/07/2004
Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2004-075
Expires:  9/30/2005

To:        DMs, DSDs, Staff and Branch Chiefs
From:      State Director, Oregon/Washington
Subject:   Oregon/Washington Zone Positions

Program Area:  Budget execution.

Purpose:  In an effort to better utilize scarce skills, Oregon/Washington (OR/WA) has established several zone positions. These scarce skill positions can be at any organizational level and are shared among several organizational units (districts and field offices) within a geographic area. Each district and office is encouraged to explore further opportunities to use the zoned position concept.

Critical to the success of the zone concept is a clear agreement among all participants on how the zoned position will serve them and how the position will be funded. Work within the zone will vary from year to year. The "home office" has key roles: to provide administrative support for the position, identify the position on their Table of Organization (TO), and agree with other offices on how future zone vacancies and new positions will be filled. This Instruction Memorandum (IM) identifies and defines the essential aspects for managing zone positions (and full time equivalent or Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation). We recognize that there are positions in service first organizations that may be zoned or shared and this is not intended to impact the service first operations.

Policy/Action:

Identification of zone positions:

The current OR/WA TO will identify zoned positions by office. This distinction needs to be made so it is clear which positions are truly zoned, shared, or staffed with multi-district/office responsibilities. Determining which positions are zoned is assigned to the OR/WA Field Team. Existing zoned positions are listed in Attachment (1).

After the zoned positions are determined, the appropriate home office will identify the position as zoned on their
office TO and will count the position against the home office’s position ceiling. Zoned positions will be tracked separately for the purposes of position management, filling vacancies, or abolition, as described below.

**Establishment of new zone positions:**

The State Director, the OR/WA Field Team, or the offices served by a proposed zone position may identify additional positions that need to be recognized, funded, and managed as zoned. Once identified and approved, stakeholders for each zoned position need to agree on funding, source of the position, time, workload allocations, and performance evaluation. In many situations, positions for zoned personnel will be provided by the State Office.

Proposals for new zoned positions will include: need for the position, title, grade, duties, funding and position sources, offices served, and location. The proposal will be forwarded to the Field Team who will determine if the proposed position should be established as zoned. The Field Team’s determination, including rationale and documentation, will be forwarded to the Associate State Director for concurrence and approval.

**Funding allocations for zoned positions:**

Previously, most zoned positions had agreements on funding allocations (e.g., zoned Personnel Management Specialist positions in Eugene and Roseburg). In the past, costs were either earmarked annual funding identified in the Annual Work Plan (AWP), shared among participating offices or added to the home office’s base funding.

In order to provide a more consistent approach, funding for all zoned positions will be identified in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 AWP. Moneys earmarked for zoned positions are intended for and are usually spent on zone functions but are not necessarily spent by the zone position identified. Host units, in consultation with stakeholders, will negotiate any requested changes in funding through the Oregon State Office (OSO). If changes in funding agreements are made by the stakeholders, they need to be communicated by the host office to the OSO Management and Budget Staff (OR-915) to insure that funding allocations are correctly identified in the AWP Directives. Current funding agreements will continue until other agreements are made.

**Zoned functions:**

Some districts have placed the zoned position within a functional work group that provides support across district lines (such as engineering). These positions will be tracked separately, funded, and filled using the same process described above. Should the stakeholders agree to discontinue the zoned functional workgroup, the position would be returned to the Associate State Director and the zone position taken off the home office TO.

**Process for filling vacant zone positions:**

The offices served by the zoned position will form an "Evaluation Team" for each such position. Team membership will include the position’s supervisor (either proposed or past), one member from each office within the zone, and the appropriate State Office program manager/specialist. At a minimum, the team should evaluate the need for the position determine position skills (change or stay the same), agree on performance standards and how performance feedback will be given, and agree on location and recruitment strategy.

This process focuses on the need to involve zone position stakeholders while balancing zone position needs within state priorities. The role of the State Office program manager/specialist review is to insure that the overall management of the zone position is considered from a statewide perspective. Decisions about position location and recruitment method are made by the offices served by the zone position. In that way, the stakeholders can negotiate the location of the position, because its location may impact the effectiveness of the position (bulk of the work in one office) or open the applicant pool to meet diversity goals, while assuring little adverse effect on meeting statewide priorities.
Zone positions may be located within functional work groups of similar disciplines such as housing a zoned civil engineering technician in a field office engineering work group. When other like positions within the home office or other districts are changed or eliminated (e.g. not filling a district or lead engineer position), all offices in the zone need to fully coordinate their decisions to determine the impact on the zone and determine what work will not be completed or what work assignments will be shifted. Agreements between the offices may need to be changed to reflect skills mix change within the functional workgroup.

Should an Evaluation Team decide to abolish a zone position, the position would be returned to the Associate State Director to be reallocated for other OR/WA priority needs and the zoned position (and FTE) will be removed from the home office TO. However, because zoned positions were established as field positions to meet field needs, the Human Resource Management Council (HRMC) is encouraged to give strong consideration to reallocating the vacated zoned position to meet high priority field needs.

**Timeframe:** This IM is effective immediately. Allocation of dollars and clarification and/or changes to the zoned position policy will be handled in conjunction with the AWP schedule.

**Budget Impact:** While there is no net impact on the OR/WA budget, the funding of zoned positions will be highlighted in the AWP.

**Background:** This IM primarily addresses zoned positions. The following definitions are provided to ensure they are not confused with other categories of the positions:

**Zone Positions:**
True zone positions serve more than one office and work under a formal agreement developed by all offices within the zone. A zone position may be assigned to a zoned work function (team) that serves more than one office (such as engineering zones). Zone positions will be identified separately on the district TO and will count against the district position ceiling. However, zone positions are not “owned” by the home office and are subject to formal statewide controls (see below). Zone positions are tracked on a statewide list (see Attachment (1)).

**Shared Positions:**
These are positions with informal agreements between individual offices served. Shared positions usually involve two (sometimes more) offices. Funding, work schedules, performance feedback, and FTE allocations will be identified in the informal agreement between the offices. Shared positions will not be specifically identified on TO’s.

**Technical Specialist:**
These are positions with specialized skills used by multiple offices. Skills are used across district boundaries on an as needed/requested basis. Positions are funded by the home office or agreements made between the offices served.

**State Staff Specialist in District Offices:**
The State Office may locate Staff Specialist positions in district offices. These positions have statewide responsibilities, are funded by the State Office, and are attached to the State Office TO.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** Manuals and handbooks are not affected by the IM.

**Coordination:** Coordination of the Zoned position issue will be coordinated by the Office of Management and Budget (OR-915) in consultation with the OR/WA Field Team.

**Contact:** Questions should be directed to Jerry Hubbard, Management Analyst, at (503) 808-6115, or to Mary Smelcer, OR/WA Field Team, at (541) 618-2440.
**Districts with Unions** are reminded to notify their unions of this Instruction Memorandum and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you assistance in this matter.

Signed by
Kathy Eaton
Acting, Associate State Director

Authenticated by
Heather Gisch
Computer Specialist

1 Attachment(s)
1 - [Oregon/Washington Zone Positions](#) (1p)

**Distribution**
WO-510 (MIB 5628)
HR-210

2. **Compensation and Benefits Specialist** - Established in 1995 to serve Western Oregon Districts. Position currently located in Eugene (Pat Hicks). Position transferred to the district as part of the Western Oregon Personnel Delegation.

3. **Employee Relations Specialist** - Established in 1995 to serve Western Oregon Districts. Position originally housed in Medford (Catherine Barash); currently located in Roseburg (Kyle Worley). Position transferred from OR 953 as part of the Western Oregon Personnel Delegation.

4. **Civil Engineering Tech.** - Established in 1996 to serve Salem, Eugene, Prineville (Deschutes RA), and Spokane (Wenatchee RA), or the “Salem Zone”. Position currently located in Salem (Bruce Runge) assists with dam and bridge program. Position transferred from OR941 as part of the Engineering Study.

5. **Civil Engineering Tech.** - Established in 1996 to serve Vale, Burns, Prineville (Central Oregon RA), and Spokane (Border RA), or the “Vale Zone”. Position currently located in the Vale District, Jon Hall. Position transferred from OR941 as part of the Engineering Study.

6. **Civil Engineers** – Two positions established in 1996 to serve Medford (Southern Zone - Jon Hall EOD 01/04 - moving from Vale – and Bob Walker) Coos Bay, and Lakeview districts. Position currently located in the Medford District. Position transferred from OR941 as part of the Engineering Study.


8. **Scaler** - Established in 1997 to serve Western Oregon Districts. Position transferred from OR930; currently located in Eugene (Frank Cooper).

9. **Geologist/Mining Engineer** – Zoned position established to perform mineral exams for Western Oregon, currently located in Medford (David Taylor).

10. **Ecological Site Index (ESI) Team** - Six positions (4 currently encumbered: Leet, Martell, Slavik, Tackman), currently located in Lakeview.