



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



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July 28, 2010

In Reply Refer To:
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EMS TRANSMISSION: 7/28/10
Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2010-023
Expires: 09/30/2011

To: Managers and Supervisors

From: Acting State Director

Subject: Use of Interview Panels in Staffing Vacant Positions

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum revises and updates policy for conducting interview panels established in IM-CA-2002-058.

Interview panels may be used at the discretion of the selecting official. There are two forms of interview panels; recommendation panel and selection panel. Selecting officials may opt to use one or both for a single vacancy. It is extremely important that supervisors in BLM California be consistent in their use of interview panels to evaluate candidates for positions.

Action: Selecting officials in consultation with Human Resources will determine if a panel will be used and who will serve on the panel.

Panels must consist of three members; at least one panel member must be a subject matter expert and all members must be at an equivalent or higher grade than the full performance level of the position being filled. Effort should be made to ensure the panel is comprised of diverse individuals.

One member of the panel should be designated as an EEO representative, with responsibility to ensure that merit principles and nondiscriminatory provisions are adhered to. The panel member must contact the EEO Office for guidance on their role as the EEO representative. In lieu of designating an EEO representative, an EEO Specialist may serve as an EEO advisor to the panel.

All panel members must participate in each interview, either in person or by telephone.

All documentation (notes) from the panel process will be collected and maintained by the selecting official and kept confidential for two years from the date of the interview. In the event a selection process results in an EEO action, the selecting official will be responsible for ensuring copies of the documentation (notes) are provided to the EEO investigator.

Recommendation Panel

Use of this type of panel is normally used for the purpose of narrowing the list of candidates and making it more manageable for the selecting official to interview and select. Candidates eliminated during this panel process will not be referred or considered by the selecting official.

- It is the responsibility of the selecting official to advise the panel on those competencies he/she feels are most important for successful performance in the position.
- The selecting official may not serve on this panel.

Selection Panel

The use of this panel is to jointly select the best candidates(s) for the position.

- The supervisor of the vacant position will serve as the chair of the panel and it is his/her responsibility to advise the other panel members on those competencies he/she feels are most important for successful performance in the position.
- Panel members will check references before jointly selecting the best candidate

Special note for Law Enforcement Ranger Panels: The designated panel chair is responsible for coordinating with the Special-Agent-in-Charge (SAC) or the SAC's designee. In accordance with Law Enforcement General Order 07, the SAC, or the SAC's designee, will participate in the interview and selection process to provide technical expertise in evaluating candidates.

General Requirements

If a panel member becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest, he/she must recuse him/herself from participating on the panel. A conflict of interest may include a personal friend or relative as a candidate. Involvement in a prior or pending EEO complaint filed by a candidate for the position may also be grounds for recusal. The panel member will simply inform the selecting official of the recusal due to a conflict.

If the vacancy announcement stipulates that no additional information may be accepted from the applicant after the closing date, the panel must not accept any other material during the interview.

No discussion of any tentative selection is to occur until the selecting official makes the official announcements.

Question concerning the above policy may be addressed to Colene Gearman, Chief, Staffing and Classification Section, Branch of Human Resources, at (916) 978-4477.

Signed by:
A. Este Stifel
Acting Acting State Director

Authenticated by:
Richard A. Erickson
Records Management