

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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In Reply Refer To:
1550/1120 (MT912) **P**

October 7, 2014

EMS TRANSMISSION – 10/7/14
Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2015-003
Expires: 9/30/2016

To: All Montana/Dakotas Employees
From: Chief, Office of Communications
Subject: BLM Montana/Dakotas Publication Procedures

Program Area: All programs

Purpose: This instruction memorandum is an update to IM No. MT-2012-023 and provides guidance for producing publications within the BLM Montana/Dakotas.

Policy/Action: Publications that will be distributed externally require completion of the official publications approval form 1550-8 before work is started. The term “publication” includes all published materials including videos and posters containing the BLM name, emblem/logo, or message. The approval process applies to exhibits, interpretive signs, kiosk panels, and informational and promotional items, including all electronic publishing formats, as well as materials produced by Federal and external partners. Publications as described above and/or that incur an expenditure of BLM funds or work-months require approval from the chief of the Office of Communications (MT-912) prior to development, production, and release. Publications that exceed \$20,000 that cover areas beyond our three-state area, or that are national in scope, require additional approvals from the Washington Public Affairs Office (WO-610).

Please note that all published NEPA documents, including resource management plans, newsletters, and maps, do not require a 1550-8 but need to follow BLM design standards. It is highly recommended these items be reviewed by a public affairs specialist prior to publishing.

The process for publication approval is identified below.

Prior to submitting form 1550-8 to the Office of Communications for approval, originators should coordinate with their respective public affairs specialist to fully develop the concept. Below is an outline of the recommended process:

1. Present concept to local public affairs specialist.
2. Initiate BLM form 1550-8.
3. Indicate whether the project is a new concept or a revision of a previously printed publication. Typically, reprint work with minor changes that meets publication standards will be automatically approved if funding is available. Future reprints with no changes do not require the completion of a new 1550-8. New concepts, including interagency and partnership efforts, will be reviewed by the Publications Management Committee to ensure proposals meet bureau and department requirements.
4. Obtain the appropriate signatures in the "Concept Approvals" section. Send the form, along with a mock-up or outline, to the state printing specialist (MT-912).
5. Before the publication/exhibit is published, the "Final Approvals" section of form 1550-8 must be completed.

Depending on the project, members of the Publications Management Committee will include representatives from the following areas:

- Printing specialist (core member)
- Office of Communications public affairs specialist
- District public affairs specialist
- Originator of the request/project
- Interpretive/accessibility specialist, when needed
- National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) state office lead, when publication deals with any NLCS unit, including national monuments, wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, and national and historic trails
- State Office Web Lead, if proposal is related to the external web site

Informational and Promotional Items

Any purchase of these types of items must be in compliance with the President's Executive Order *Promoting Efficient Spending*, as well as IM No. MT-2012-084, Purchase of Promotional and Informational/Educational Items. Every effort should be made to purchase practical, cost-effective items made in the USA.

Web and Social Media Sites

Websites used as stand-alone products are also considered publications. Although completion of a 1550-8 is not required, please work with your district or state office public affairs specialist when considering and/or developing a new website. IM No. MT-2013-011, change 1 provides guidance on working with Montana/Dakotas web staff. In addition, numerous detailed BLM and DOI directives related to websites are listed at <http://web.blm.gov/wo600/webresources/policy.php>.

Working closely with employees, the Office of Communications is also responsible for developing and posting content to Montana/Dakotas social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Office of Communications also coordinates with the BLM Office of New Media to support national social media campaigns. For bureau and departmental policy on social media, go to http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/socialmedia/Socialmedia_policies.html.

As a BLM employee, you must abide by all applicable laws, presidential executive orders, governing rules, regulations, and policies issued by the BLM, Department of Interior,

Government Printing Office, Joint Committee on Printing, and Office of Management and Budget. All publications, whether funded all or in part by the BLM, are subject to these policies.

For additional information on publishing standards and Bureau policies, review the BLM's [design standards web site](#).

Time Frame: Effective upon receipt.

Budget Impact: Implementing this IM has minimal budget implications.

Background: Regardless of the publishing method used (printed or electronic), our goal is to showcase the Montana/Dakotas; therefore a professional image must be maintained at all times and enhanced at every opportunity. The Communications Team is committed to working with you to bring positive awareness to BLM Montana/Dakotas.

Manual/Handbook Sections affected: None

Coordination: Office of Communications in coordination with Washington Office of Communications and Public Affairs.

Contact: Ann Boucher at (406) 896-5255.

Signed by:
Melodie A. Lloyd
Chief, Communications (MT912)

Authenticated by:
Ann Boucher (MT912)

2 Attachments

1-Questions and Answers about Publications (2 pp)

[2-Publications Approval Form, 1550-8](#) (4 pp)

Questions and Answers about Publications

I am interested in developing a publication. What should I do?

Contact your respective public affairs specialist or, if unavailable, a state office public affairs specialist to determine if a publication is the best way to communicate the intended message to your target audience.

Am I required to consult the Office of Communications?

Yes. All publications must receive approval from the chief of the Office of Communications (MT-912). This ensures that all publications advance the BLM's mission and director's priorities. The mechanism for obtaining this approval is through the [publications approval form 1550-8](#).

Am I authorized to procure printing/duplicating?

No. The state office printing specialist must place all printing orders.

Can I use my government charge card to pay for printing/duplicating from a vendor?

No. Printing and/or duplicating are not an authorized use of a government credit card. There is no authorization for copying either, except in a few extenuating circumstances. For more information on copying procedures, see [WO IM 2005-079](#).

Can I contact the state office printing specialist directly?

Yes. This IM does not change your ability to continue consulting with the state office printing specialist for your printing or reproduction needs and to ensure that items requiring team review are handled appropriately.

What will happen if I do not obtain approval using the form 1550-8?

The Montana/Dakotas could lose its delegated authority to approve publications, and you could potentially be personally liable for the printing costs. Additionally, the department could pull funding for printing from a program budget.

After the concept is approved, then what?

The next step is to begin development of the publication. Consult the state printing specialist for more information. The Publications Management Committee will review publications with state or local interest. If a publication is national in scope, the Office of Communications will coordinate with the Washington Office Public Affairs division chief.

How do I determine how much time and money to budget for a publication?

The printing specialist will coordinate with the Government Printing Office to determine costs and time estimates.

Do I need to work with the Office of Communications on publications with BLM partners?

Yes. Any product that carries the BLM name/logo (which implies endorsement) or incurs the expenditure of BLM funds or work-months (time) must receive Office of Communications approval for state-specific products, or WO Public Affairs approval for national products.

Can I create and use my own logo?

No. Logos must be approved by the Department of the Interior. Requests to DOI for a logo must be coordinated through the Office of Communications and WO-BLM Public Affairs. Until approval is received from DOI, there is no authorization allowing for use of appropriated funds to reproduce unrecognized logos in any manner. See [WO IM No. 2012-033](#) for additional information.

Is there a standard format for BLM brochures?

Yes. The BLM director has endorsed a common look for the agency's printed products. A publications standards manual describes the appropriate use and placement of logos, and design elements to use. Check with the state office printing specialist for specifics and assistance, or review BLM design standards at http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/610/design_standards/index.html.

Who pays for producing the publication?

The office or subactivity requesting the publication should be prepared to cover costs for requested publications.

Do I need to get approval from the Office of Communications to purchase non-monetary recognition items such as a mug or other items?

Gaining approval to purchase non-monetary recognition items is something to discuss with Human Resources or your manager. The Office of Communications is primarily concerned with ensuring that these items contain an appropriate message promoting the BLM and/or our mission (a printing requirement). Exception: If the message is a BLM nationally-endorsed message on fire or safety, it most likely will not require approval from the Office of Communications. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

What if I have other questions that have not been addressed here?

For more information, visit the [Get Started](#) link at the BLM's design standards web site.

You may also contact the printing specialist, Ann Boucher, at (406) 896-5255.