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United States Department of Agriculture  
Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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**Mission Area Directive**

**MRP 4335.1**

**11/24/2020**

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**VOLUNTARY CHANGE IN OFFICIAL DUTY STATION**

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**1. PURPOSE**

This Directive establishes MRP policy for Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) employee requests for a voluntary change in official duty station.

**2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS AND REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

- a. This is a new Directive.
- b. This Directive is in force until cancelled or superseded.

### 3. BACKGROUND

This Directive is issued as a supportive response to continued employee challenges in balancing work and family life. Human Resources recognizes those challenges and works to support a balance while ensuring mission accomplishment.

### 4. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

This Directive must be applied in conjunction with:

- a. [5 United States Code, Chapter 65, Telework;](#)
- b. [5 Code of Federal Regulation \(CFR\) 335.102, Agency Authority to Promote, Demote or Reassign;](#)
- c. [General Services Administration, Federal Travel Regulation;](#)
- d. [USDA Department Regulation \(DR\) 4080-811-002, Telework Program, dated 01/04/2018;](#)
- e. [Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Chapter 23, Change in Duty Station;](#)
- f. [OPM Official Worksite for Location-Based Pay Purposes Fact Sheet;](#) and
- g. [OPM Guide to Telework in the Federal Government, dated April 2011.](#)

### 5. SCOPE

This Directive applies to all MRP employees who want to continue to work in their current position but need to do so, due to personal reasons, from another location on a temporary or permanent basis, who are:

- a. General Schedule (GS) employees;
- b. Performance Management and Recognition System (GM) employees;
- c. Administratively Determined (AD) employees; or
- d. Term Appointments.

## 6. EXCEPTIONS

This Directive does not apply to MRP employees who:

- a. Want to move into a different job in a different location;
- b. Want to work in foreign countries either on a permanent or temporary basis;
- c. Are assigned overseas;
- d. Are temporary (Not To Exceed [NTE] 1 year);
- e. Are Prevailing Rate;
- f. Are members of a bargaining unit;
- g. Are members of the Senior Executive Service, SL or similar, or,
- h. Are on detail with another Federal Agency or international organization.

**Note:** This Directive is excluded from the administrative grievance system. An [appeal process](#) has been established to review denials.

## 7. POLICY

It is MRP policy to support a balance between a family-friendly workplace and a results-focused mission area which expects its mission to be carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible. When employees are faced with significant life events and it is in the Mission Area's best long-term interest, alternatives to traditional duty station designations may be considered. While management will do its best, approval of a voluntary reassignment request, whether temporary or permanent, is not guaranteed. Ultimately, the mission takes precedence.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The effective implementation of the policy and procedures as established by this Directive requires the responsibilities of the following individuals and/or groups:

- a. Administrators will decide employee appeals of denials. This authority may not be re-delegated in AMS. This authority may be re-delegated to the Associate Administrator in APHIS.

- b. Program Deputy Administrators or equivalent will be delegated the authority to approve requests that are for more than six (6) months or on a permanent basis. This authority may not be re-delegated to lower supervisory levels.
- c. First Level Supervisors will be delegated the authority to approve requests that are six (6) months or less.
- d. Employees will be responsible for adequately describing their situation and providing documentation to support their request.

## 9. PROCEDURES

Additional materials and information may be found in the Human Resources Desk Guide (HRDG) Subchapter 4335, [Voluntary Change in Official Duty Station](#).

## 10. FORMS

The form(s) that are referenced and required for use as established by this Directive include:

- a. [MRP Form 370 – Managerial Assessment Worksheet for Change in Official Duty Station](#)
- b. [MRP Form 371 – Change in Official Duty Station Agreement](#)
- c. [MRP Form 372 – Employee Application for Change in Official Duty Station \(ODS\)](#)
- d. [MRP Form 373 - Decision Documentation for Change in Official Duty Station \(ODS\)](#)
- e. [MRP Form 374 – Administrator’s Decision on Denial of Change in Official Duty Station](#)
- f. [MRP Form 375 - Employee Declaration of Residence for Home Leave Determinations](#), if applicable.

The forms listed above can be accessed at the [APHIS Master Electronic Forms Library](#).

## 11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Federal records created by this Directive must be maintained in accordance with the established [General Records Schedule \(GRS\)](#) and/or the [APHIS/AMS](#) Records Management Handbook when applicable. If employees are named in an active litigation

hold, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and/or other action, those records, regardless of media, must be preserved and maintained in their native format until otherwise notified by your Agency Records Officer and/or the Office of General Counsel.

- a. The Marketing and Regulatory Program - Information Technology, Information Management Branch (MRP-IT, IMB) is the official record keeper of this Directive which is to be preserved permanently, per [Paperwork and Data Management \(PDM\) 4-1](#).
- b. The Servicing Personnel Office is the official record keeper of forms and documentation relating to a voluntary change in official duty station, which will be destroyed three (3) years unless longer retention is required for business use, in accordance with [DAA-GRS-2017-0007-0001](#) or [APHIS/AMS](#) Records Handbook.
- c. Medical records concerning an employee's Reasonable Accommodation (RA) are to be forwarded to the RA staff, HRD. These files will be destroyed three (3) years after employee separation from the Agency or when all appeals, including third party, are concluded whichever is later. Longer retention is permitted if required for business use. See [DAA-GRS-2015-0007- 0005](#).

## 12. INQUIRIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- a. Direct any general inquiries on procedural matters to the [Servicing Personnel Office, Human Resources Operations](#), Minneapolis, MN.
- b. Direct requests for complex policy interpretations to the Pay, Leave, and Tours of Duty Specialist, HR Policy Branch, Human Resources Division, MRP Business Services at 301-851-2929.
- c. For records management inquiries contact your Program Records Management Liaison for [AMS](#) or [APHIS](#).
- d. Additional materials and information can be found in the Human Resources Desk Guide (HRDG) Subchapter 4335, [Voluntary Change in Official Duty Station](#).
- e. This Directive can be accessed on the [APHIS](#) and [AMS](#) Issuances homepages.

/s/ Doug Nash  
Deputy Administrator  
MRPBS Business Services