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TITLE: Implementation of Direct Referrals for Civil Cases
Beginning December 1, 1983

APPROVAL DATE: Nov. 28, 1983

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ORIGINATING OFFICE: OECM

☒ **FINAL**

☐ **DRAFT**

LEVEL OF DRAFT

☒ **A — Signed by AA or DAA**

☐ **B — Signed by Office Director**

☐ **C — Review & Comment**

REFERENCE (other documents):

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DIRECTIVE DIRECTIVE DI



United States Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460

OSWER Directive Initiation Request

1. Directive Number
9891.5

2. Originator Information

Name of Contact Person
Courtney, M. Price

Mail Code
WH-527

Office
OECM

Telephone Code

3. Title
Implementation of Direct Referrals for Civil Cases Beginning December 1. 1983

4. Summary of Directive (include brief statement of purpose)

This memo provides guidance to EPA Headquarters and Regional personnel regarding procedures to follow in implementing this direct referral agreement.

5. Keywords
Referrals

6a. Does This Directive Supersede Previous Directive(s)?

☒

No

☐

Yes

What directive (number, title)

b. Does It Supplement Previous Directive(s)?

☒

No

☐

Yes

What directive (number, title)

7. Draft Level

☒

A - Signed by AA/DAA

☐

B - Signed by Office Director

☐

C - For Review & Comment

☐

D - In Development

8. Document to be distributed to States by Headquarters?

☐

Yes

☒

No

This Request Meets OSWER Directives System Format Standards.

9. Signature of Lead Office Directives Coordinator

Dorlene M. Williams

Date

7/28/88

10. Name and Title of Approving Official

John Hubbard

Date

7/28/88

EPA Form 1315-17 (Rev. 5-87) Previous editions are obsolete.

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, DC 20460

NOV 28 1983

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT COUNSEL

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Implementation of Direct Referrals for Civil Cases
Beginning December 1, 1983

FROM: Courtney M. Price *Courtney M. Price*
Assistant Administrator for Enforcement
and Compliance Monitoring

TO: Regional Administrators, Regions I - X
Regional Counsels, Regions I - X
Associate Enforcement Counsels
OECM Office Directors

I. BACKGROUND

On September 29, 1983, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Land and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ) entered into an agreement which, beginning on December 1, 1983, allows certain categories of cases to be referred directly to DOJ from EPA Regional offices without my prior concurrence. A copy of that agreement is attached to this memorandum.

This memorandum provides guidance to EPA Headquarters and Regional personnel regarding procedures to follow in implementing this direct referral agreement. Additional guidance will be issued as required.

II. PROCEDURES FOR CASES SUBJECT TO DIRECT REFERRAL

The attached agreement lists those categories of cases which can be referred directly by the Regional Administrator to DOJ. All other cases must continue to be reviewed by Headquarters OECM and will be referred by me to DOJ. Cases which contain counts which could be directly referred and counts which require Headquarters concurrence should be referred to EPA Headquarters. If you are uncertain whether a particular case may be directly referred, you should contact the appropriate Associate Enforcement Counsel for guidance.

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Many of the procedures for direct referral cases are adequately explained in the September 29th agreement. However, there are some points I want to emphasize.

Referral packages should be addressed to Mr. F. Henry Habicht, II, Assistant Attorney General, Land and Natural Resources Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530, Attention: Stephen D. Ramsey. The time limitations set forth in the agreement for review and initial disposition of the package will commence upon receipt of the package in the Land and Natural Resources Division, and not at the DOJ mailroom. Delivery of referral packages to the Land and Natural Resources Division will be expedited by use of express mail, which is not commingled with regular mail in DOJ's mailroom.

The contents of a referral package (either direct to DOJ or to EPA Headquarters) should contain three primary divisions: (1) a cover letter; (2) the litigation report; (3) the documentary file supporting the litigation report.

The cover letter should contain a summary of the following elements:

- (a) identification of the proposed defendant(s);
- (b) the statutes and regulations which are the basis for the proposed action against the defendant(s);
- (c) a brief statement of the facts upon which the proposed action is based;
- (d) proposed relief to be sought against the defendant(s);
- (e) significant or precedential legal or factual issues;
- (f) contacts with the defendant(s), including any previous administrative enforcement actions taken;
- (g) lead Regional legal and technical personnel;
- (h) any other aspect of the case which is significant and should be highlighted, including any extraordinary resource demands which the case may require.

A referral to DOJ or to Headquarters EPA is tantamount to a certification by the Region that it believes the case is sufficiently developed for the filing of a complaint, and that the Region is ready, willing and able to provide such legal and technical support as might be reasonably required to pursue the case through litigation.

As provided in the September 29, 1983, agreement, information copies of the referral package may be provided to the U.S. Attorney for the appropriate judicial district in which the proposed case may be filed. These information packages should be clearly labelled or stamped with the following words: "Advance Copy -- No Action Required At This Time". Also, information copies should be simultaneously provided to the appropriate OEMCM division at Headquarters. It is important that the directly referred cases be tracked in our case docket system and Headquarters oversight initiated. Copies of the referral cover letter will be provided to OEMCM's Office of Management Operations for inclusion in the automated case docket system when Headquarters informational copy is received at OEMCM's Correspondence Control Unit.

Department of Justice Responsibilities

DOJ shares our desire to handle these cases as expeditiously as possible. To that end, DOJ has agreed that, within thirty days of receipt of the package in the Land and Natural Resources Division at DOJ Headquarters, it will determine whether Headquarters DOJ or the U.S. Attorney will have the lead litigation responsibilities on a specific case. DOJ will notify the Regional offices directly of its determination in this regard, with a copy to the appropriate OEMCM division. Although USA offices will have lead responsibilities in many cases, the Land and Natural Resources Division will continue to have oversight and management responsibility for all cases. All complaints and consent decrees will continue to require the approval of the Assistant Attorney General for the division before the case can be filed or settled.

DOJ has reaffirmed the time frame of the Memorandum of Understanding, dated June 15, 1977, for the filing of cases within 60 days after receipt of the referral package, where possible. Where it is not possible, DOJ will advise the Region and Headquarters of any reasons for delays in filing of the case. However, when DOJ determines that the USA should have the lead responsibilities in a case, DOJ will forward the case to the USA within thirty days of referral to the extent feasible.

DOJ can request additional information from a Region on a case or return a case to a Region for further development. In order to avoid these delays, referral packages should be as complete as possible and the Regions should work closely with DOJ to develop referral packages.

The Deputy Administrator has expressed concern in the past on the number of cases returned to the Regions or declined by EPA or DOJ. I have assured the Deputy Administrator that I will closely track the number of cases declined by DOJ or returned to the Regions and the reasons for the declination or return as indications of whether direct referrals are a feasible method of handling EPA's judicial enforcement program.

Headquarters OECM Responsibilities

Although OECM will not formally concur on cases directly referred to DOJ, OECM will still review these packages and may offer comments to the Regions and DOJ. DOJ is free to request EPA Headquarters assistance on cases, as DOJ believes necessary. EPA Headquarters review will help to point out potential issues and pinpoint areas where future guidance should be developed. OECM will also be available as a consultant to both DOJ and the Regions on these cases. OECM will be available to address policy issues as they arise and, as resources permit, may be able to assist in case development or negotiation of these cases. Any request from a Regional office for Headquarters legal assistance should be in writing from the Regional Administrator to me, setting forth the reasons for the request and the type of assistance needed.

OECM also maintains an oversight responsibility for these cases. Therefore, Regional attorneys must report the status of these cases on a regular basis through use of the automated case docket. All information for the case required by the case docket system must appear in the docket and be updated in accordance with current guidance concerning the automated docket system.

Settlements in Cases Subject to Direct Referral

I will continue to approve and execute all settlements in enforcement cases, including those in cases subject to direct referral and amendments to consent decrees in these cases. This is necessary to ensure that Agency policies and enforcement activities are being uniformly and consistently applied nationwide. After the defendants have signed the settlement, the Regional Administrator should forward a copy of the settlement to me (or my designee) with a written analysis of the settlement and a request that the settlement be signed and referred for approval by the Assistant Attorney General for the Land and Natural Resources Division and for entry. The settlement will be reviewed by the appropriate OECM Enforcement Division for consistency with law and Agency policy.

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Within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of the settlement by the appropriate OECM division, I will either sign the settlement and transmit it to DOJ with a request that the settlement be entered, or transmit a memorandum to the Regional Office explaining factors which justify postponement of referral of the package to DOJ, or return the package to the Region for changes necessary before the agreement can be signed.

Obviously, we want to avoid the necessity of communicating changes in Agency settlement positions to defendants, especially after they have signed a negotiated agreement. To avoid this, the Regional office should coordinate with Headquarters OECM and DOJ in development of settlement proposals. A copy of all draft settlement agreements should be transmitted by the Regional Counsel to the appropriate Associate Enforcement Counsel for review before it is presented to the defendant. The Associate Enforcement Counsel will coordinate review of the settlement with the Headquarters program office and respond to the Regional office, generally, within ten days of receipt of the draft. The Regional office should remain in contact with the Headquarters liaison staff attorney as negotiations progress. Failure to coordinate settlement development with appropriate Headquarters offices may result in rejection of a proposed settlement which has been approved by the defendant(s) and the Regional office.

I will also continue to concur in and forward to DOJ all requests for withdrawal of cases after referral. In addition, I will review and concur in any delay in the filing or prosecution of a case after referral. This is appropriate because cases which are referred to DOJ should be expeditiously litigated to conclusion, unless a settlement or some other extraordinary event justifies suspending court proceedings. The review of reasons for withdrawal or delay of cases after expenditure of Agency and DOJ resources is an important function of OECM oversight. Therefore, should the Regional offices desire to request withdrawal or delay of a case which has been referred to DOJ, a memorandum setting forth the reasons for such a request should be forwarded to the appropriate OECM division, where it will be reviewed and appropriate action recommended to me.

III. CASES NOT SUBJECT TO DIRECT REFERRAL

Those cases not subject to direct referral will be forwarded by the Regional Administrator to the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring for review prior to referral to DOJ. OECM has committed to a twenty-one day turn-around time for these cases. The twenty-one day review period starts when the referral is received by the appropriate OECM division.

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Within this twenty-one day period, OECM will decide whether to refer the case to DOJ (OECM then has fourteen additional days to formally refer the case), to return the case to the Region for further development, or to request additional information from the Region.

Because of this short OECM review period, emphasis should be placed on developing complete referral packages so that delay occasioned by requests for additional information from the Region will be rare. OECM may refer a case to DOJ which lacks some information only if the referral can be supplemented with a minimum of time and effort by information available to the Regional office which can immediately be gathered and transmitted to DOJ. However, this practice is discouraged. In the few instances in which a case is referred to DOJ without all information attached, the information should, at a minimum, be centrally organized in the Regional office and the litigation report should analyze the completeness and substantive content of the information.

A referral will be returned to the Region, with an explanatory memorandum, if substantial information or further development is needed to complete the package. Therefore, the Regions should work closely with OECM attorneys to be certain referral packages contain all necessary information.

IV. MEASURING THE EFFICACY OF THE DIRECT REFERRAL AGREEMENT

I will use EPA's case docket system, OECM's quarterly Management Accountability reports and DOJ's responses to the referral packages to review the success of the direct referral agreement. OECM will review the quality of the litigation reports accompanying directly referred cases and discuss the general quality of referrals from each Regional office at case status meetings held periodically with DOJ's Environmental Enforcement Section.

If you have any questions concerning the procedures set out in this memorandum, please contact Richard Mays, Senior Enforcement Counsel, at FTS 382-4137.

Attachment



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF THE
ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable P. Henry Habicht, II
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Land and Natural Resources Division
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Hank:

As a result of our meeting on Thursday, September 8, 1980 and the subsequent discussions of respective staffs, we are in agreement that, subject to the conditions set forth below, the classes of cases listed herein will be referred directly from EPA's Regional Offices to the Land and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

The terms, conditions and procedures to be followed in implementing this agreement are:

1. The Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring will waive for a period of one year the requirement of the Assistant Administrator's prior concurrence for referral to the Department of Justice for the following classes of judicial enforcement cases:
 - (a) Cases under Section 1414(b) of the Safe Drinking Water Act which involve violations of the National Interim Primary Drinking Water Regulations, such as reporting or monitoring violations, or maximum contaminant violations;
 - (b) The following cases under the Clean Water Act:
 - (i) cases involving discharges without a permit by industrial dischargers;
 - (ii) all cases against minor industrial dischargers;
 - (iii) cases involving failure to monitor or report by industrial dischargers;

- (iv) referrals to collect stipulated penalties from industrials under consent decrees;
 - (v) referrals to collect administrative spill penalties under Section 311(j) of the CWA;
 - (c) All cases under the Clean Air Act except the following:
 - (i) cases involving the steel industry;
 - (ii) cases involving non-ferrous smelters;
 - (iii) cases involving National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants;
 - (iv) cases involving the post-1982 enforcement policy.
2. Cases described in Section 1, above, shall be referred directly from the Regional Administrator to the Land and Natural Resources Division of DOJ in the following manner:
- (a) The referral package shall be forwarded to the Assistant Attorney General for Land and Natural Resources, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), with copies of the package being simultaneously forwarded to the U.S. Attorney (USA) for the appropriate judicial district in which the proposed case is to be filed (marked "advance copy-no action required at this time"), and the Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring (OECM) at EPA Headquarters. OECM shall have the following functions with regard to said referral package:
 - (i) OECM shall have no responsibility for review of such referral packages, and the referral shall be effective as of the date of receipt of the package by DOJ; however, OECM shall comment to the Regi upon any apparent shortcomings or defects which it may observe in the package. DOJ may, of course, continue to consult with OECM on such referrals. Otherwise, OECM shall be responsible only for routine oversight of the progress and management of the case consistent with applicable present and future guidance. OECM shall, however, retain final authority to approve settlements on behalf of EPA for these cases, as in other cases.
 - (ii) The referral package shall be in the format and contain information provided by guidance memoranda as may be promulgated from time to time by OECM in consultation with DOJ and Regional representatives.

- (iii) DOJ shall, within 30 days from receipt of the referral package, determine (1) whether the Lands Division of DOJ will have lead responsibility for the case; or (2) whether the USA will have lead responsibility for the case.

While it is agreed that to the extent feasible, cases in which the USA will have the lead will be transmitted to the USA for filing and handling within this 30-day period, if DOJ determines that the case requires additional legal or factual development at DOJ prior to referring the matter to the USA, the case may be returned to the Regional Office, or may be retained at the Lands Division of DOJ for further development, including requesting additional information from the Regional Office. In any event, DOJ will notify the Regional Office, OECM and the USA of its determination of the lead role within the above-mentioned 30-day period.

- (iv) Regardless of whether DOJ or the USA is determined to have lead responsibility for management of the case, the procedures and time limitations set forth in the MOU and 28 CFR §0.65 et seq., shall remain in effect and shall run concurrently with the management determinations made pursuant to this agreement.

3. (a) All other cases not specifically described in paragraph 1, above, which the Regional Offices propose for judicial enforcement shall first be forwarded to OECM and the appropriate Headquarters program office for review. A copy of the referral package shall be forwarded simultaneously by the Regional Office to the Lands Division of DOJ and to the USA for the appropriate judicial district, the USA's copy being marked "advance copy-no action required at this time."
- (b) OECM shall review the referral package within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the date of receipt of said package from the Regional Administrator and shall, within said time period, make a determination of whether the case should be (a) formally referred to DOJ, (b) returned to the Regional Administrator for any additional development which may be required; or (c) whether the Regional Administrator should be requested to provide any additional material or information which may be required to satisfy the necessary and essential legal and factual requirements for that type of case.

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(c) Any request for information, or return of the case to the Region shall be transmitted by appropriate letter or memorandum signed by the AA for OECM (or her designee) within the aforementioned twenty-one day period. Should OECM concur in the proposed referral of the case to DOJ, the actual referral shall be by letter from the AA for OECM (or her designee) signed within fourteen days of the termination of the aforementioned twenty-one day review period. Copies of the letters referred to herein shall be sent to the Assistant Attorney General for the Lands Division of DOJ.

(d) Upon receipt of the referral package by DOJ, the procedures and time deadlines set forth in paragraph No. 8 of the MOU shall apply.

In order to allow sufficient time prior to implementation of this agreement to make the U.S. Attorneys, the Regional Offices and our staffs aware of these provisions, it is agreed that this agreement shall become effective December 1, 1983. Courtney Price will distribute a memorandum within EPA explaining this agreement and how it will be implemented within the Agency. (You will receive a copy.)

I believe that this agreement will eliminate the necessity of formally amending the Memorandum of Understanding between our respective agencies, and will provide necessary experience to ascertain whether these procedures will result in significant savings of time and resources. In that regard, I have asked Courtney to establish criteria for measuring the efficacy of this agreement during the one year trial period, and I ask that you cooperate with her in providing such reasonable and necessary information as she may request of you in making that determination. At the end of the trial period—or at any time in the interval—we may propose such adjustments in the procedures set forth herein as may be appropriate based on experience of all parties.

It is further understood that it is the mutual desire of the Agency and DOJ that cases be referred to the USA for filing as expeditiously as possible.

I appreciate your cooperation in arriving at this agreement. If this meets with your approval, please sign the enclosed copy in the space indicated below and return the copy to me for our files.

Sincerely yours,



Alvin L. Alm
Deputy Administrator

Approved:



F. Henry Habicht, II
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Land and Natural Resources Division
U.S. Department of Justice