



## Procedure for Developing and Approving Standard Operating Procedures

1. **APPLICABILITY.** This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to all programs in the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM). This Procedure applies to all staff involved in any task that is appropriate for, or has an established, SOP.
2. **PURPOSE.** Establishing standardized methods for performing common repetitive tasks improves the DEM's efficiency, consistency, verifiability, credibility, and our ability to attain the highest levels of Quality Assurance, Quality Control, and Quality Improvement (QA/QC/QI). This document describes the DEM's procedure for developing, formatting, approving, and distributing standard operating procedures (SOPs).
3. **DEFINITIONS**
  - 3.1 Director - Refers to the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.
  - 3.2 Originator - Refers to the individual primarily responsible for the development of a SOP, including drafting, review, finalization, and distribution.
  - 3.3 Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) - Refers to the individual at DEM who is the primary point of contact for quality issues and the Quality Management Team (Team).
  - 3.4 Quality Management Team (Team)- The DEM organizes and oversees agency-wide QA/QC/QI functions with a Team. Team members represent the regulatory programs within the DEM.
  - 3.5 Senior Management – Refers to the group of individuals existing at any point in time that oversee the DEM environmental programs.
  - 3.6 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – Is the description of a prescribed method that must be used by DEM staff to complete certain routine or repetitive operations, analyses, or actions. SOPs do not establish policy and are not appropriate to describe procedures or requirements that apply to members of the public, other than persons acting as agents of, or under contract with, the DEM.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **COMPLIANCE** - All staff engaged in operations, analysis or actions subject to or appropriate for the application of a SOP are responsible for becoming familiar, and complying, with the contents of this procedure prior to drafting or revising a SOP. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that staff is familiar with and adhere to the SOPs affecting their program functions. Any SOP in place before this document's effective date must be scheduled for annual review and periodic renewal by a responsible individual. At the time of any revision after the effective date of this SOP, an existing SOP must be brought into conformance with the provisions of this document. Until revision or renewal occurs, no changes are required to bring currently effective SOPs into conformance with this SOP.
- 4.2 **DEVELOPMENT** - The Originator is responsible for initial development. Initial development includes word processing and distribution for review.



- 4.3 **APPROVAL** - The Originator is responsible for obtaining preliminary and final approval of a proposed SOP.
- 4.4 **DISTRIBUTION** - After all approval signatures have been obtained, the Originator is responsible for distributing the SOP to any affected parties, as evidenced by a completed distribution list on the Coversheet. Members of the Quality Team and the Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) should receive all final SOPs.
- 4.5 **MAINTENANCE** - An individual, typically the Originator, will be assigned responsibility for ensuring that a SOP reflects current needs and standards. Consistent with DEM's Quality Management Plan, the responsible individual will annually evaluate SOPs to ensure current needs are being met; likewise, all SOPs will be renewed every five years.

## 5. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1 **ORIGINATION** - A staff member, a contractor or an agent of the Department may originate a draft or a concept for a draft SOP for any appropriate procedure or process.
- 5.2 **CONTENTS** – All new SOPs developed by DEM should include the following contents in the order outlined below. SOPs that are developed by contractors or agents of DEM shall include the following contents. The DEM project officers shall have the flexibility to waive the order of the contents if the contractor or agent is using a SOP that has been previously developed.
  - 5.2.1 **APPLICABILITY** - The first section of a SOP contains a brief statement identifying the scope of the SOP and indicates the individuals and programs that are affected by the SOP.
  - 5.2.2 **PURPOSE** - The second section of a SOP contains a brief statement explaining the objective of the procedure. It indicates what organization, documentation, and/or activities are involved or affected by the procedure, and a concise background description.
  - 5.2.3 **DEFINITION** - The third section of a SOP lists the meaning of words or groups of words not commonly known to the potential user of the SOP. For example, technical terms and/or acronyms are described in this section.
  - 5.2.4 **RESPONSIBILITY** - The fourth section of a SOP lists all the individuals or groups responsible for implementing the procedure or performing certain tasks associated with the procedure and their duties.
  - 5.2.5 **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES** - The fifth section of a SOP lists, in detail, all the steps required to perform the particular job task.
  - 5.2.6 **REFERENCES** - The final section of a SOP lists any written reference materials used in compiling the procedure.



### 5.3 **FORMAT**

5.3.1 **CONFORMANCE TO STANDARD** - All SOPs must at least include the *Page Header Contents* information as detailed in Section 5.3.2 of this SOP. If a contractor or agent of DEM develops the SOP, it will not be required to contain the DEM logo. All other information shall be included in the header. The standard text format detailed in FIGURE 2 of this SOP is required for SOPs that apply DEM-wide. The format is recommended, but not required, for bureau- or program-specific SOPs.

5.3.2 **PAGE HEADER CONTENTS**. Each page, including the coversheet, shall include a header containing the Department logo in the upper left corner, and a document identifier in the upper right hand corner that contains the following information in nine (9) point bolded type, Arial: SOP No ,Effective Date, Revision No, Last Revision Date, and page number.

### 5.4 **SOP DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS** - The SOP approval process consists of a preliminary draft cycle and a final approval cycle.

5.4.1 **PRELIMINARY DRAFT DEVELOPMENT** - In the preliminary draft cycle, the originator contacts their direct supervisor to gain approval for going forward with drafting a proposed SOP, or one that is being drafted by a contractor or agent of DEM. Upon approval to proceed, the originator should work with appropriate staff to prepare a draft. "Appropriate staff" should include a representative group of individuals who will be affected by the SOP. Any staff member who makes a request to review a draft SOP should be provided that opportunity.

5.4.2 **PRELIMINARY DRAFT APPROVAL** - The signatures required for preliminary draft approval should be correspond to the scope and applicability of the SOP. SOPs applying to a discrete unit within a Office, at a minimum, need a sign-off from the project and program manager. The preliminary draft must first be submitted to the Originator's project or program manager for comment and approval to proceed with the review process. Upon receiving approval to proceed, if other supervisors on the same management level as the Originator's supervisor have staff affected by provisions in the draft SOP, the draft should then be circulated to them for review and comment. Reviewers are free to use their judgment to include additional individuals and groups whose input they believe would be valuable to the process. All required reviewers must submit a response to the Originator, indicating approval or changes necessary to obtain their approval.



- 5.4.3 COMMENT RECONCILIATION - The Originator of the draft SOP will resolve any issues raised in comments during the draft review cycle. Upon resolution of the comments, the Originator must obtain approval signatures on the Draft Approval Routing Sheet from any unit supervisor and Division Director whose staff will be affected by the SOP. The completed Draft Approval Routing Sheet should be retained in a file created during the SOP drafting process.
- 5.4.4 FINAL APPROVAL - As with preliminary draft approval, the signatures necessary for final approval should be commensurate with the SOPs scope and applicability.
- (A) PROGRAM SPECIFIC SOPs. Preliminarily approved drafts of program specific SOPs must receive final approval from the relevant Office Chief and sign off from the DEM's QAM. Only these two (2) signatures should be on the SOP Coversheet.
  - (B) MULTI-PROGRAM / BUREAU SOPs. Preliminarily approved drafts of multi-program SOPs must receive final approval from the appropriate Bureau and Assistant Directors and a sign off from the QAM.

## 6. REFERENCES

- 6.1 DEM QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN (September 2003)



# SAMPLE

## FIGURE 1 – SAMPLE COVERSHEET COVERSHEET STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE APPROVALS:

Quality Team Chair:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name    Signature    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Director of Water Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name    Signature    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Director of Air, Waste and Compliance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name    Signature    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If Appropriate,  
Associate Director of Natural Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name    Signature    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### DISTRIBUTION:

- ( ) Office of Air Resources ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Division of Agriculture ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Office of Waste Management..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Office of Compliance and Inspection ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Office of Technical and Customer Assistance ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Groundwater and Wetlands Protection ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Surface Water Protection ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Water Quality and Standards ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Office of the Director ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) Quality Management Team ..... By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title:  
Originator Name:



## **FIGURE 2 – FORMAT SENARIOS**

**1. SECTION HEADING.** Section Text. (see 4.4.2)

1.1 SUB-SECTION HEADING. Subsection text. (see 4.4.3)

1.1.1 PARAGRAPH HEADING. Paragraph text. (see 4.4.4)

(A) SUB-PARAGRAPH HEADING. Sub-paragraph text (see 4.4.5)

The following description establishes the standard format and is required for all DEM-wide SOPs and suggested for any bureau- or program-specific SOPs.

**TYPEFACE** - All type, except the header, shall be 11 point, Arial.

**PAGE MARGINS** - Margins will be 1-inch top and bottom, and 1-inch left and right.

**COVERSHEET CONTENTS** - Each SOP must have a coversheet that contains the following information: (1) the page header described in section 4.3.2 of this SOP; (2) title; (3) Originator's name; (4) approval sign-off; and (5) a distribution check-off (see FIGURE 1, appended).

**DRAFT APPROVAL SHEET** - A SOP Draft Approval Sheet is used to track the review and approval of preliminary SOP drafts (see FIGURE 3, appended).

**SECTIONS** - The first level of written division in a SOP document is referred to as a "section". Single digit numbers are used to identify a section. The heading of a section must have the "SOP SECTION HEADING" *character style* applied to it and the text of the section, including its heading must have the "SOP Section Text" *paragraph style* applied to it. By applying these *styles* to the heading and body, each will automatically be formatted and indented to its appropriate position. A tab between the section number and heading activates the hanging indent, and two spaces between header title and any paragraph text are used to separate the heading from the body.

**SUB-SECTIONS** - The second level of written division in a SOP document that is part of, but separate from, a section is referred to as a "sub-section". Two numbers, separated by a period, identify a sub-section. The numbers and words in the heading of a sub-section must have the "SOP SUB-SECTION HEADING" *character style* applied to it, and the text of the sub-section, including its heading, must have the "SOP Sub-section Text" *paragraph style* applied to it. By applying these *styles* to the heading and body, each will automatically be formatted and indented to its appropriate position. A tab between the sub-section number and heading activates the hanging indent, and two spaces between end of the header title and beginning of any sub-section text are used to separate the heading from the body.

**PARAGRAPHS** - The third level of written division in a SOP document that is part of, but separate from, a sub-section is referred to as a "paragraph". Three numbers, separated by periods, identify a paragraph. The numbers and words in the heading of a paragraph must have the "SOP PARAGRAPH HEADING" *character style* applied to it, and the text of the paragraph,



including its heading, must have the “SOP Paragraph Text” *paragraph style* applied to it. By applying these *styles* to the heading and body, each will automatically be formatted and indented to its appropriate position. A tab between the paragraph number and heading activates the hanging indent, and two spaces between end of the heading title and beginning of any paragraph text are used to separate the heading from the body.

SUB-PARAGRAPHS - The fourth and final level of written division used in a SOP document is part of, but separate from, a paragraph is referred to as a “sub-paragraph”. An uppercase letter enclosed in parentheses identifies a sub-paragraph. The letter and any words in the heading of sub-paragraph must have the “SOP SUB-PARAGRAPH HEADING” *character style* applied to it, and the text of the sub-paragraph, including its heading, must have the “SOP Sub-paragraph Text” *paragraph style* applied to it. By applying these *styles* to the heading and body, each will automatically be formatted and indented to its appropriate position. A tab between the subparagraph letter and heading activates the hanging indent, and two spaces between end of the heading title and beginning of the sub-paragraph text are used to separate the heading from the body.

TABLES AND FIGURES - The inclusion of illustrative tables and figures is appropriate in SOPs. Since the format of these items will vary, no prescribed method is established herein. All tables and figures must be identified with a number and title that will have the “SOP Tables and Figures Id.” *paragraph style* applied to it. By applying this *style* to the number and title, it will automatically be formatted and centered to its appropriate position.



# SAMPLE

## FIGURE 3 – DRAFT APPROVAL ROUTING FORM

### DRAFT APPROVAL ROUTING FORM STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Date in Process:

Operation Title:

Identification No.:

Revision No.:

Originator Name:

\*\*\*\*\*

The attached draft is forwarded for your evaluation and comment. Suggested changes should be concise and reasons specific. Return to sender.

Supervisor:

\_\_\_\_\_ q redraft based on comments q OK  
Print Name Initials Date

Office Director:

\_\_\_\_\_ q redraft based on comments q OK  
Print Name Initials Date





## **FIGURE 4 – IDENTIFICATION AND CODING SYSTEM**

Office of the Director (OD)  
OD-QM..... Quality Manager

Bureau of Environmental Protection (BEP)  
BEP-AWC ..... Air, Waste & Compliance  
BEP-WR..... Water Resources

### **AIR Resources (A)**

A-A..... Administration  
A-I..... Inspection  
A-M ..... Monitoring  
A-MS..... Mobile Sources  
A-P ..... Permitting  
A-T ..... Toxics

### **Waste Management (WM)**

WM-B..... Brownfields  
WM-FF..... Federal Facilities  
WM-MW..... Medical Waste  
WM-SR..... Site Remediation  
WM-SW..... Solid Waste  
WM-SF..... Superfund  
WM-LUST..... Leaking Underground Storage Tanks  
WM-UST ..... Underground Storage Tanks

### **Water Resources (WR)**

WR-GWC..... Ground Water Certification  
WR-W ..... Watersheds TMDL  
WR-WQC ..... Water Quality Certifications  
WR-WRR ..... Water Resource Regulation

### **Information Management Unit (IMU)**

#### **Agriculture (AG)**

AG-P ..... Pesticides