



Chapter 17: Organization and Authority

Executive Policy 17-01

Resource Contact: Master Custodian,
Ecology Policy and
Procedure Manual

Established: March 16, 1990

References: RCW [43.21A.090](#)
Chapter [173-06](#) WAC

Revisions Effective: December 15, 2015

Delegating Authority to Ecology Managers

Purpose: To establish accountability for Ecology actions.

Application: This policy applies to all Ecology employees, represented and non-represented, whenever a signature authorization or delegation of other powers is required.

1. Signature and Managerial Authority Matrix Establishes Powers Delegated by the Director.

According to RCW 43.21A.090, the Ecology Director may delegate the performance of his or her powers, duties, and functions, other than those relating to the adoption, amendment, or rescission of rules and regulations, to Ecology employees whenever that appears desirable to fulfill the purposes of the laws implemented by Ecology. Chapter 173-06 WAC implements RCW 43.21A.90 and provides that, consistent with their assigned duties and responsibilities, Ecology employees are delegated authority to act on behalf of the Director and Ecology to administer programs and all other duties assigned to Ecology.

According to Chapter 173-06 WAC, this policy specifies, in a matrix, the extent of signature authority for Ecology employee positions whose assigned duties and responsibilities include authority to take formal and/or other action on behalf of the Director and/or the agency. This includes, but is not limited to, issuing penalties, orders, directives, permits, or other decisions reviewable before appropriate administrative or judicial bodies. The matrix contained in this policy is known as the Signature and Authority Matrix (SAM – see Attachment A), and is effective with the approval of this policy. The SAM may only be revised with final approval of the Director.

2. Deputy Director has Director's Signature Authority in Director's Absence.

3. Designated Officials May Not Further Delegate or Rescind Matrix Authority Except Through a Formal Letter.

It is not the intent of this policy to encourage downward delegation of authorities. In unique circumstances, an ongoing downward delegation letter may be issued according to WAC 173-06-120 (4).

Any Ecology employee designated on the SAM whose assigned duties and responsibilities include signature authority to act on behalf of the Director and/or Ecology may not delegate that authority to an employee that he or she supervises unless it is done consistent with this policy, WAC 173-06-120 (4), and is in writing.

An Ecology official designated on the SAM may delegate his or her signature authority downward one level, or rescind a subordinate's SAM authority through a formal letter (see Attachment B). An employee delegated signature authority through a formal letter may not further delegate the authority. Delegation letters must identify the Ecology position number and the name of the employee appointed to fill that position. Unless rescinded, authority granted by letter remains in effect as long as the employee delegated authority retains the same position number.

An employee who delegates his or her authority according to this section retains his or her delegated authority to act on behalf of the Director or Ecology.

4. Delegation Letters Require Two Signatures.

Delegation letters require signature by the employee granting delegation and the employee receiving delegation. The only exception is accepting authority via the Executive Orders of Succession – see section 8 of this policy.

If an employee is not available to sign a delegation letter to grant authority, his or her supervisor may delegate authority for the absent employee. In this case, the absent employee's supervisor is the delegating authority who authors and signs the letter.

5. Supervisor Authorities May Not be Delegated to Non-Supervisory Employees, With One Exception.

Authorities that are unique to a supervisor-employee relationship may not be delegated to a non-supervisory employee. This includes, but is not limited to, authorizing leave and time information, training, and travel. Authorities not related to the direct supervisor-employee relationship may be delegated consistent with this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, authorizing contracts, purchasing, permits, and enforcement actions.

The one exception is administrative and executive assistants to members of the Executive Management Team (EMT). An EMT member may delegate authorities that are unique to a supervisor-employee relationship to his or her administrative or executive assistant, even if that position does not supervise.

6. Temporary Absence Delegation Letters May be Issued for Planned Absences.

Temporary absence delegation letters are used when an employee with delegated authorities has a planned absence, will be unavailable for a period of time (vacations, illness, etc.), and is available to sign a delegation letter. Unless noted otherwise, temporary absence delegation letters give the recipient the same SAM authorities as those of the delegating employee. See section 7 of this policy for absences lasting more than three weeks.

Temporary absence delegation letters (see Attachment B) must be signed by both parties and sent and stored according to Fiscal Office instructions. Authorities delegated through temporary absence delegation letters may not be further delegated.

7. Personnel Action is Required for Absences Lasting More Than Three Weeks.

When an employee with delegated authorities will be absent from work for more than three (calendar) weeks, formal personnel action is required to designate another employee as "acting" in the absent employee's position. These temporary assignments do not require delegation letters. In these situations, the employee in "acting" status may be a non-supervisory employee.

8. Attachment C Establishes the Executive Orders of Succession for Unplanned Absences in Some Situations.

When an employee with delegated authorities is going to be absent from work for a period of time and is not available to sign a temporary delegation letter, the Executive Orders of Succession established in Attachment C to this policy go into effect. The employee receiving delegated authority through the Orders of Succession must accept the authority through a letter, as shown in Attachment D to this policy (except when the Deputy Director is acting on behalf of the Director). The letter must be stored according to Fiscal Office instructions.

Rescinding and returning authority delegated according to this section must also be documented through a formal letter as shown in Attachment E to this policy.

9. Copies of All Delegation Letters Must be Maintained.

Programs and Fiscal maintain downward delegation letters as follows:

- The original delegation letter is kept in the program, and the program maintains a file containing all delegation letters.
- One copy of each delegation letter is provided to the employee receiving delegation.
- One copy of each delegation letter is provided to the Fiscal Office according to Fiscal Office instructions. Copies are added to an agency electronic repository for later access.

10. Responsibility and Accountability for Actions Remain with the Manager Designated on the SAM.

Formal letters delegating signature authority downward are only to 1) grant proper authority in the absence of an Ecology manager; and 2) provide convenience for a manager when it is appropriate to provide for signature authority at a lower level. Managers are accountable for actions related to authorities they delegate to another employee.

11. Supervisor Signs for Delegated Official in Some Situations.

- If an authorization is required, the official designated on the SAM is not available, and no written appointment has been made, the designated official's supervisor may sign.
- For authorizations related to sensitive or controversial issues, the designated official may refer the authorization to his or her supervisor for signature.
- Regardless of the authority delegated in the SAM, no employee may approve his or her own request. In such cases, the requestor's supervisor must sign.

12. Designee Prints Authorized Official's Name and Title, and Signs Own Name.

Authorization signatures must be legible and include the title of the official designated on the SAM. When an employee is appointed to sign in the place of an Ecology official designated on the SAM, the appointed employee prints the name of the designated official, the designated official's title, and signs his or her own name. (Ex: Maia Bellon, Director *Teri North*.)

Approved:



Maia D. Bellon
Director

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