

Administrative Policy No. 11.08

Subject: DSHS Administrative Policies

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Chapter [43.20A](#) RCW

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Approved by: **Original signed by Sharon Swanson**
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish:

- The criteria for DSHS administrative policies; and
- The process for creating, revising, rescinding and reviewing DSHS administrative policies.

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS employees who write, review, and approve DSHS administrative policies.

Additional Guidance and Resources

- [DSHS Administrative Policy Guide](#)
- [DSHS Style Guide](#)
- [Writing Courses](#) offered by the Department of Enterprise Services
- [AP Standards of capitalization](#)
- [RPAU intranet SharePoint](#)
- [Planning Questions for Writing an Administrative Policy](#)

Definitions

Accounting administrative policies: Are DSHS administrative policies that focus on DSHS accounting issues and are written or revised by the Facilities, Finance and Analytics Administration (FFAA). Accounting policies are located in DSHS administrative policy chapter 19.

Administrative policy: Is a department-wide directive that is approved at the executive level by either the senior director of policy and rules, the assistant secretary of FFAA, or the senior director of human resources, as appropriate. An administrative policy regulates the internal management of DSHS and the actions of its employees in more than one administration.

Chief officers: Are the chief financial officer, chief information officer, and the chief risk officer.

Effective date: Is the date a DSHS administrative policy was first published. This date remains the same throughout the life of the policy.

Executive review: Is the second level of required review by key reviewers at the executive level for comment.

Final signature review: Is the third level of required review for obtaining final approval and signatures.

Housekeeping change: Is a change to a phone number, name, or address in a DSHS administrative policy, or a clarification that does not change the effect of the policy.

Initial review: Is the first level of required review by division directors and other key internal reviewers for comment.

Policy writer: Is the person responsible for writing or revising a DSHS administrative policy and completing sunset reviews.

Review and approval form: Is DSHS form [02-003A](#) entitled “Review and Approval of DSHS Administrative Policies” used when circulating a draft DSHS administrative policy for internal review and comment, for summarizing the comments received, and for obtaining final signatures.

Rule: Is a legal directive that carries out the intent of a federal or state law (statute) that affects those internal and external to the department. Washington rules are called Washington Administrative Code (WAC). See [RCW 34.05.010\(16\)](#). Administrative Policy is not a rule.

Rules and policies assistance unit (RPAU): Is the unit within the office of the secretary, policy and rules, responsible for coordinating the DSHS administrative policy-making process. RPAU gives guidance about administrative policies, maintains approved policies on the DSHS Intranet, and keeps the official administrative policy files.

Statute or Revised Code of Washington (RCW): Is the compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of session laws enacted by the legislature, and signed by the governor, or enacted via the initiative process. The official version of the RCW is published by the [Statute Law Committee](#) and the [Code Reviser](#).

Sunset review: Is a review that occurs at least every four years throughout the life of a DSHS administrative policy that determines the continued need for the policy, implements changes in applicable law, and ensures accuracy and clarity of the policy.

Policy Requirements

A. Criteria for DSHS administrative policies

1. A DSHS administrative policy must:
 - a. Regulate the internal management or the actions of DSHS employees in more than one administration.
 - b. Comply with [DSHS Style Guide](#) and the [AP standards of capitalization](#).
 - c. Go through the department's three levels of review as described in [section B](#) of this policy.
 - d. Be approved and signed by the appropriate signature authorities:
 - i. Chapter 18 human resource policies, AP 9.09 – Wellness, and AP 15.15 – Use of electronic messaging systems and the Internet require the signature of the senior director of human resources;
 - ii. Chapter 19 accounting policies require the signature of the assistant secretary of FFAA;
 - iii. All other policies require the signature of the senior director, office of policy and rules.
 - e. Be published on the department's administrative policy intranet SharePoint site where it is accessible to all employees.
 - f. Go through sunset review at least every four years as described in [Section D](#) of this policy.
2. A DSHS administrative policy **is not** a statute, a rule, or a document intended to be relied upon or to create any substantive or procedural legal right enforceable in a court of law or administrative proceeding by any private party involved in matters with the Department of Social and Health Services.

B. Process for creating, revising, rescinding and reviewing DSHS administrative policies

The process for creating, revising, and rescinding administrative policies must include the following three levels of review. The online [DSHS Administrative Policy guide](#) gives more detailed procedures and tools for this process.

1. **Initial review.** The initial review is the first formal review of a draft DSHS administrative policy. The policy writer must send a draft of the policy, and a review and approval form to the following or their designees:
 - a. Chief officers;
 - b. Senior directors;
 - c. DSHS division directors;
 - d. Deputy assistant secretaries;
 - e. The internal audit and consultation manager;
 - f. Board of appeals, chief review judge
 - g. The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) policy review appointee for each administration;
 - h. DSHS rules coordinator;
 - i. Human resource division labor relations staff;
 - j. The policy writer's assistant attorney general; and
 - k. Any other stakeholders as specifically required by the policy holder's administration or division.

Note: The [distribution list for initial review ListServ](#) includes people listed above in 1 a through k. The policy writer must manually add their assistant attorney general and other stakeholders.

2. **Executive review.** The executive review is the second level of required review for administrative policies. The policy writer must send a draft of the policy, and the review and approval form to the following executive reviewers or their designees:
 - a. Deputy secretaries;
 - b. Assistant secretaries;
 - c. Chief officers;
 - d. Senior directors; and
 - e. RPAU staff.

Note: The [distribution list for executive review ListServ](#) includes people listed above in 2 a through e.

3. **Final signature review.** For the final review:
 - a. The policy writer must submit electronically to RPAU the final draft Word version of the policy with a PDF version of the review and approval form signed by their division director or equivalent.
 - b. RPAU will obtain final approval and publish policies on the [DSHS Administrative Policy intranet website](#).

C. **Union involvement**

During initial review, the human resource division labor relations staff must review and may determine that it is appropriate to send the administrative policy to a DSHS

employee union before the policy is finalized. Labor relations staff will notify the policy writer about their decision by contacting the policy writer directly.

If labor relations staff recommend union involvement, the policy writer must work with labor relations staff to either:

- Rewrite the policy; or
- Involve the union using protocol directed by labor relations staff.

D Sunset review for existing policies

1. The policy writer must complete a sunset review for an existing administrative policy at least every four years. A policy writer may establish a sunset review schedule more frequently than four years, if necessary.
2. The policy writer may request an unlocked, unsigned Word version of the most current policy they wish to amend, or do a “save as” of the current policy from PDF to Word from the AP SharePoint.
3. For sunset review, all DSHS administrative policies must go through the entire review process, even if there are no proposed changes.
4. A business need may require a policy to be updated before the four year sunset review interval in which case a new sunset review date would be applied four years from the date revised.
5. An existing DSHS administrative policy remains in effect during the sunset review, policies do not automatically expire if the sunset review date is passed.

Note: HRD policies are subject to WAC and collective bargaining agreement effective dates and may be backdated or made retroactive.

E. Housekeeping changes

1. Housekeeping changes may be made to an administrative policy without going through the initial or executive review process outlined in [section B](#) above. The policy writer must obtain approval for the change from their division director or equivalent, and submit the revised policy to RPAU. See the online [Administrative Policy Guide](#) for procedures on completing a housekeeping change.
2. The policy writer must request an unlocked, unsigned Word version of the most current policy they wish to amend.
3. Housekeeping changes do not result in a change to the revised date or the sunset review date on a policy.

Note: Certain typographical errors and website address updates may not require director approval. Contact RPAU to inquire about these types of changes.

F. Policy writers’ responsibilities

All policy writers must:

1. Obtain the approval of their division director before beginning the process to create, revise or rescind an administrative policy.
2. Conduct sunset reviews on existing administrative policies, update or rescind administrative policies and coordinate with any other programs on the subject matter.
3. Write and revise the administrative policy, using clear language that users will understand (See [DSHS Style Guide](#)).
4. Distribute draft policies to all required reviewers in the initial and executive review steps. Allow two weeks for review at each level. If more than three policies are sent for review in the same week, increase review time to three weeks.
5. Provide to RPAU all the necessary paperwork for final signature.

G. RPAU's responsibilities

RPAU must:

1. Provide technical and writing assistance as requested.
2. Notify the policy writer when an administrative policy is coming due for sunset review. See [section D](#).
3. Review proposed DSHS administrative policies at all stages of the review process.
4. Complete the final preparation of each administrative policy and obtain the appropriate executive signature.
5. Maintain the notification list of all persons who have asked to receive updates about DSHS administrative policies.
6. Keep the official DSHS administrative policy making files, including:
 - a. Final signed policies;
 - b. Previous versions of policies; and
 - c. Completed review and approval forms.
7. Maintain online resources related to the DSHS administrative policy-making process.
8. Provide training or consultation on the DSHS administrative policy-making process.

ⁱ Updated Style Guide link

ⁱⁱ Updated to standard capitalization and added links to AP standards of capitalization