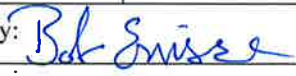


State of Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Administrative Services Standard Operating Procedures	No. I-001	Page 1 of 3
	Issued February 8, 2022	Effective Upon Issuance
Subject: Approving Officer Authority	Approved By: 	
	Robert E. Ernisse Administrative Services, Director	

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to communicate and define responsibilities and procedures for the delegation of authority for purchases and approving authority for Division Approving Officers.

Distribution:

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Directors and Administrative Officers

Authority:

AS 37.10.020, vouchers to be approved by Administrative Officer; AS 37.10.030, Responsibility of Officer or Employee Approving or Certifying Voucher; and AS 37.10.40, Enforcement of Liability. Section 35.050 – Receipt of Goods or Services and 35.060 – Payment Approval from the Alaska Administrative Manual also apply.

Definition:

As defined under AS 37.10.030 – 040:

“The Officer or employee approving or certifying a voucher is responsible for the existence and correctness of the facts recited in the certificate or stated on the voucher or its supporting papers for the legality of the proposed payment under the appropriation or fund involved...”

In the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, an Approving Officer is a State of Alaska employee close to or having immediate access to persons close to, the source of a transaction using public funds. They have access to first-hand knowledge pertinent to a transaction enabling reasonable and responsible scrutiny of the transaction as required by Alaska statutes and regulations.

The payment offices of the Department rely heavily on the Approving Officers and the assurances provided by their approval in both the quality and the reliability of the internal controls needed in the payment and expenditure process.

Policy:

The Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in executing the provisions, duties, and responsibilities provided in statute, may delegate to employees of the Department approving authority over certain administrative actions and document approval as directed by AS 37.10.010 – 37.10.040 and the State Administrative Manual 35 section 010 – 090.

Accordingly, each Division Director is delegated those responsibilities and authorities required of an Administrative or Approving Officer as defined by these policies. Each Director may, with the concurrence of the Director of the Division of Administrative Services, make appointment of subordinate employees as Approving Officers for the division’s administrative actions and documents.

1. An employee may not be appointed as an Approving Officer if that employee does not have final authority in the approval of a transaction or document (within the Division).
2. An Approving Officer may not be hampered, coerced or subject to other compelling influences in the exercise of independent judgment. This should not be construed as preventing an individual from discussing the facts of a particular action of instance in order to clarify extraordinary circumstances or to present other facts.

3. An Approving Officer may not unreasonably withhold approval of an action. The Approving Officer may not be dilatory, capricious, or malicious in the exercise of the duties and responsibilities of an Approving Officer. The Approving Officer must make every effort to process documents in an efficient and expedient manner. The ignoring of, or hampering the processing of any document for unfounded reasons, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.
4. An Approving Officer will, in approving an action or document, sign the document with a full signature. Initials or signature stamps are not acceptable.

An Approving Officer may be held accountable for, and required to make good to the State, the amount of an illegal, improper, or incorrect payment resulting from a false, inaccurate, or misleading certificate or for a payment prohibited by law or which does not represent a legal obligation under the appropriation or fund involved. These provisions provide for the "Enforcement of Liability" in circumstances where an Approving Officer knowingly and/or willfully, through explicit or implicit action or omission of action, allows a violation to occur. An action or omission of action, if unwittingly done as a result of a misrepresentation or falsification by another, is not a misrepresentation or falsification by the Approving Officer.

Procedure:

Appointing an Approving Officer will require the following actions:

1. A completed DMVA Approving Officer Affidavit (attached) must be submitted for approval to the appointed employee's Division Director or Designee.
2. The Division Director signs the Approving Officer Affidavit. The forms are then forwarded to the Director of the Division of Administrative Services via email to Mva.DasAdmin@alaska.gov.
3. The Division of Administrative Services will review and send to Finance for approval, if required. If the Director of the Division of Administrative Services concurs with the appointment, a copy of the approved Approving Officer Affidavit will be sent to the Division Director and appointed Approving Officer or employee. If Commissioner level approval is required, the Division of Administrative Services will forward the forms to the Commissioner's Office.

In the event the Director of Administrative Services does not concur with the appointment, the Director of Administrative Services will notify the Division Director with an explanation of the dissent. This decision will be reversed if the Division Director can adequately address the concerns that caused the denial.

The Approving Officer may begin exercising the duties and responsibilities upon final approval.

Responsibilities:

The listed responsibilities below shall not be construed to limit the responsibilities to only that shown in this list, nor to presume that all responsibilities have been defined by this list. This list provides a foundation upon which all functions of each responsible member can be laid and built.

Director of the Division of Administrative Services or Designee, will have responsibility to:

1. Approve or disapprove the appointment of any Officer or employee as an Approving Officer.
2. Maintain a list of designated Approving Officers by Division and location. This list will be made available to each Division Director.
3. Provide support to Approving Officers, as necessary.
4. Provide performance feedback to Division Directors, when requested, for evaluation of an Approving Officer.
5. Advise Division Directors of violations to the delegated responsibilities for Approving Officer.
6. Recommend and advise Division Director on corrective action or appropriate disciplinary action.
7. Rescind or suspend the Delegation of Authority for any Approving Officer who repeatedly neglects or with willful or malicious neglect, violates the responsibilities of the Approving Officer.
8. After consultation with the Division Director, make recommendation to the Commissioner for more severe disciplinary action against an Approving Officer as deemed warranted in consultation with the Human Resource Manager.

Division Director or Designee, shall have the responsibility and authority to:

1. Delegate authority for appointing Approving Officers as specified by these policies.
2. Ensure Approving Officers carry sufficient authority to discharge the responsibilities of an Approving Officer.
3. Ensure each appointed Approving Officer knows the responsibilities and limits of authority required in carrying out the duties as a Division Approving Officer. Each Approving Officer must discharge the duties and responsibilities in accordance with guidelines established by Alaska State statutes and regulations, Alaska Administrative Manual, Bargaining Unit Contracts, and Departmental and Division operating policies and procedures.
4. Provide Approving Officers with the necessary resources to enable proper execution of the responsibilities of an Approving Officer.
5. Provide Division training to supplement other training. Training should include topics such as delegation of authority, proper state purchasing policies and procedures, personnel and payroll regulation. This list is not all inclusive and Directors are encouraged to support additional training opportunities that may be helpful for the successful completion of duties by Approving Officers.
6. As appropriate, take corrective or disciplinary action against Approving Officers or employees who knowingly violate the authority and responsibility established under this policy and procedure.
7. Consult with the Director of the Division of Administrative Services prior to any disciplinary action under these policies and procedures and advise, in writing, the Director of the Division of Administrative Services of any disciplinary action enacted under these policies and procedures.
8. Manage and keep current the list of appointed Approving Officers for the Division. The Division Director or Designee is responsible for immediately notifying the Director of the Division of Administrative Services, in an appointed Approving Officer:
 - a. Leaves the employment of the Division
 - b. Has had their Delegation of Authority revoked or suspended in whole or part
 - c. Is to be removed from the authorized list of Approving Officers for any reason

Approving Officer, shall be bound and charged with the responsibility and authority required under these policies and procedures.

The authority and responsibility entrusted to the Approving Officer, through the approval of the Delegation of Authority, Mandates the unhampered exercise of independent judgment, judgment based on first-hand knowledge and information, and expedient rendering of judgment. The Approving Officer must also rely on independent judgment to recognize extraordinary circumstances which would require further documentation.

Approving Officers must also attest to the technical correctness of transaction and documents as follows:

1. Code and approve obligations and invoices

By approving, the Approving Officer is confirming the following:

- a. The claim or obligation is valid and the procedures used in the procurement process meet Divisional, Departmental, and State purchasing rules and guidelines.
- b. The goods and/or services have been received and are satisfactory.
- c. The financial coding of the claim as an expenditure transaction, constitutes a valid claim against the appropriation charged and sufficient funds exist to pay the claim.

This memo is effective upon issuance and remains in effect until superseded. To ensure department and division internal controls are in place for proper oversight and management of responsibilities and authorities, when there is a change in leadership, either at the Commissioner or Division Director level, delegations of authority shall be reviewed and resubmitted with new leadership signatures. Additionally, approved affidavits will be reviewed by divisions quarterly for accuracy and continued applicability and any issues or removal addressed.