



OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE

Enquiries to: Peter Collard Tel:9222 4470

Number: OD0001/06

Supersedes: OP1346/00; OP 0775/96; IC 0373/96

Date: 6 November 2006

File No: 87-01271

Subject: **Operational Directives and Information Circulars**

This document supersedes Operational Circular 1346/00.

This Operational Directive is applicable to the Department of Health and all Area Health Services, agencies and entities responsible and/or accountable directly or indirectly to the undersigned.

The current Operational Circular system has been considered in the context of existing employing authorities and delegations. It will be replaced by a new system of Operational Directives and Information Circulars. **Compliance with Operational Directives is mandatory.**

All existing Operational Circulars deemed to be active are to be reviewed by the responsible Division of the Department or Health Service and where deemed necessary re-issued as either Operational Directives or Information Circulars.

Operational Directives may only be issued by the Director General and have the standing of a written instruction to all staff of the relevant employing authority.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Area Health Service Chief Executives and Department Executive Directors are responsible for ensuring the effective dissemination of Operational Directives and Information Circulars and are directly responsible and accountable for ensuring the observance of Operational Directives.

Operational Directives (OD)

The determining factor as to whether a document is an Operational Directive is not its title (eg strategy, standard, policy etc), but whether it must be complied with. Documents of this nature will be notified to the WA public health system by way of Operational Directive.

Operational Directives require the approval of and will be issued under the signature of the Director General, exercising authority over the Department of Health and authority delegated by the Minister for Health over the Metropolitan Health Services, WA Country Health Service and the Alcohol and Drug Authority.

Examples of matters that will be advised by Operational Directive are:

- Application of industrial agreements and awards
- Government policy directions
- Clinical protocols, and
- Incident reporting

Information Circulars (IC)

Documents that provide advice or guidance will be issued to the WA public health system as Information Circulars.

Information Circulars require the approval of Executive Directors or Directors when issued out of the Department and Chief Executives when issued out of an Area Health Service.

Examples of matters that will be advised by Information Circular are:

- Industrial award variations
- Fee increases (gazetted under legislation)
- Advice re introduction of new legislation
- Training courses
- Public holidays

The shift to a system of Operational Directives and Information Circulars is supported by policy and guidelines that can be accessed at <http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/index.cfm>.

Dr Neale Fong
DIRECTOR GENERAL*
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

* This Operational Directive is issued by the Director General, exercising authority delegated by the Minister for Health. Compliance with Operational Directives is mandatory.

POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE WA HEALTH OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE AND INFORMATION CIRCULAR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Introduction

All WA Health documents that require compliance **must** be incorporated into the new Operational Directive and Information Circular distribution system.

All previously issued circulars, current policies and guidelines, which have been identified as active, will be incorporated into the new system.

Endorsement to issue documents

Prior to a document being issued or published by WA Health, a review will be undertaken by the appropriate Department of Health Division or Area Health Service, to determine if the document should be incorporated into the Operational Directive and Information Circular distribution system. Similar policies of a like topic should be identified at this time. Prior to the document being placed on Department's web site, the Information and Policy Support Division, Health System Support will check format and currency of referenced documents.

Document type categories

The new system has two document type categories: Operational Directives and Information Circulars.

1. **Operational Directives (OD) - Category 1 Document.** Information and policies may take many forms and are often termed strategies, plans, frameworks and guidelines. It is not possible to simply define what is a "policy". Documents containing material that is expected to be understood by relevant staff, **complied with** and implemented by the WA public health system will be notified to the WA public health system by way of an Operational Directive, in addition to any other methods of distribution used. The determining factor for disseminating information/policy by Operational Directive rather than Information Circular is that compliance is mandatory.

Approval - Operational Directives require approval by the Director General. Operational Directives are to be prepared in accordance with the protocol at **Attachment A**.

2. **Information Circular (IC) - Category 2 Document.** Information Circulars provide a mechanism for the distribution of information within the WA public health system using the same distribution as applies to Operational Directives. It is important to note that documents previously issued by circular may now be issued as an Information Circular. Examples of matters that are required to be issued by Information Circulars are:

- Industrial award variations.
- Fee increases (gazetted under legislation).
- Advice re introduction of new legislation.

- Training courses.
- Public holidays.

Information Circulars are not to be used for policy matters, although they may be used to advise the existence or changes in status of such documents. Information Circulars are to be kept brief and written in plain language.

Approval - Information Circulars require the approval of Executive Directors or Directors when issued out of the Department and Area Health Chief Executives when issued out of an Area Health Service.

Document features

Each document will have a system-generated number consisting of a prefix; four digits and year. The document type will determine the prefix; the number will be sequential and the year will be the year issued (e.g. OD 0001/05). Attachment B is a sample template for Operational Directives and Information Circulars. This template can be accessed at the Forms site on HOLII:

http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/forms/forms.cfm?Unit_ID=2

Documents will include the date issued, responsible Directorate, contact name and number, file number and who the document applies to. Each document will have key words in accordance with the Key Words list. A list is at **Attachment C**. When issuing a revised document, titles used are to be consistent with the previously issued document.

To accompany all Operational Directives and Information Circulars, the previous Operational Circular Authorisation Form has been modified. The responsible Directorate will complete the Authorisation Form that will provide mandatory information required to issue a new document. Similar to the previous system, only the form and not the Operational Directive or Information Circular is required to be signed by the authorising officer. A sample form is at **Attachment B**. This can also be accessed at the HOLII Forms site quoted above.

Document Distribution

In February 2000, the Corporate Information Unit ceased printing and distributing hard (paper) copies of the Circulars, in favour of expanding the existing E-mail subscription and distribution system.

Government Health System Officers wishing to subscribe or unsubscribe to this service can do so by completing the appropriate on-line form on HOLII at:

<http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/email.cfm>

Persons outside of the Government Health System can also subscribe to the service by completing the on-line form on the Department of Health Internet site at: <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/email.cfm>

Location and methods of retrieval – electronically

Approved documents will appear on the Department's site under Operational Directives and Information Circulars. The Directives and Information Circulars index page will offer a search function for either Operational Directives or Information Circulars. Former Operational Instructions can also be searched from this site. Operational Directives and Information Circulars can be browsed by:

- Functional group
- A-Z
- By date
- Key Word

A search function is also provided to enable only Current or both Current and superseded documents to be retrieved. Superseded documents are shown by *no longer applicable*.

All Circulars and Instructions prior to the year 2000 are available in full from the Health Circulars site on HOLII at <http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/archive.cfm> and, therefore, Service units do not need to retain hard copies.

Submission Procedures

The submission procedures are largely unchanged. The closing and issue days are as follows:

- Closing Day: Tuesday, weekly, at 7:00 pm.
- Issue Day: Thursday, weekly.

Note that Directives and Circulars are not processed in the Christmas and New Year break.

Requirements for Operational Directives/Information Circulars

- The Operational Directive Authorisation Form authorised by the Director General or in the case of Information circulars the appropriate officer along with a copy of the Directive or Circular, including all attachments (if applicable) to be faxed to the Corporate Information Unit on 9222 2402, or forwarded to Corporate Information Unit, Information Policy and Support, Floor 3 A Block 189 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004, and
- Microsoft® Word copy of Circular and all attachments (if applicable or possible) to be forwarded to Corporate Information Unit (in Global Address Book) or ciu@health.wa.gov.au

Mandatory document review

Operational Directives and Information Circulars will have a mandatory Review Date of 5 years. The review will establish if a document remains active, is revised or obsolete.

Three months prior to a document's Review Date, an e-mail will be generated by the system to the responsible Department of Health Division or Area Health Service to advise that the document requires review. The Department of Health Division or Area Health Service must advise the appropriate Divisional Director or Area Health Chief Executive prior to the Review Date of the outcome of the review.

- If a document remains active, the review date will be reset for a further 5 years (or less if required).
- If a document is not to continue, its status will be changed. It will be removed from the active document lists and placed in the archive. The Directorate will issue an Information Circular to advise that the document is no longer current.
- If the content of a document requires amendment, the Directorate must develop a replacement document.

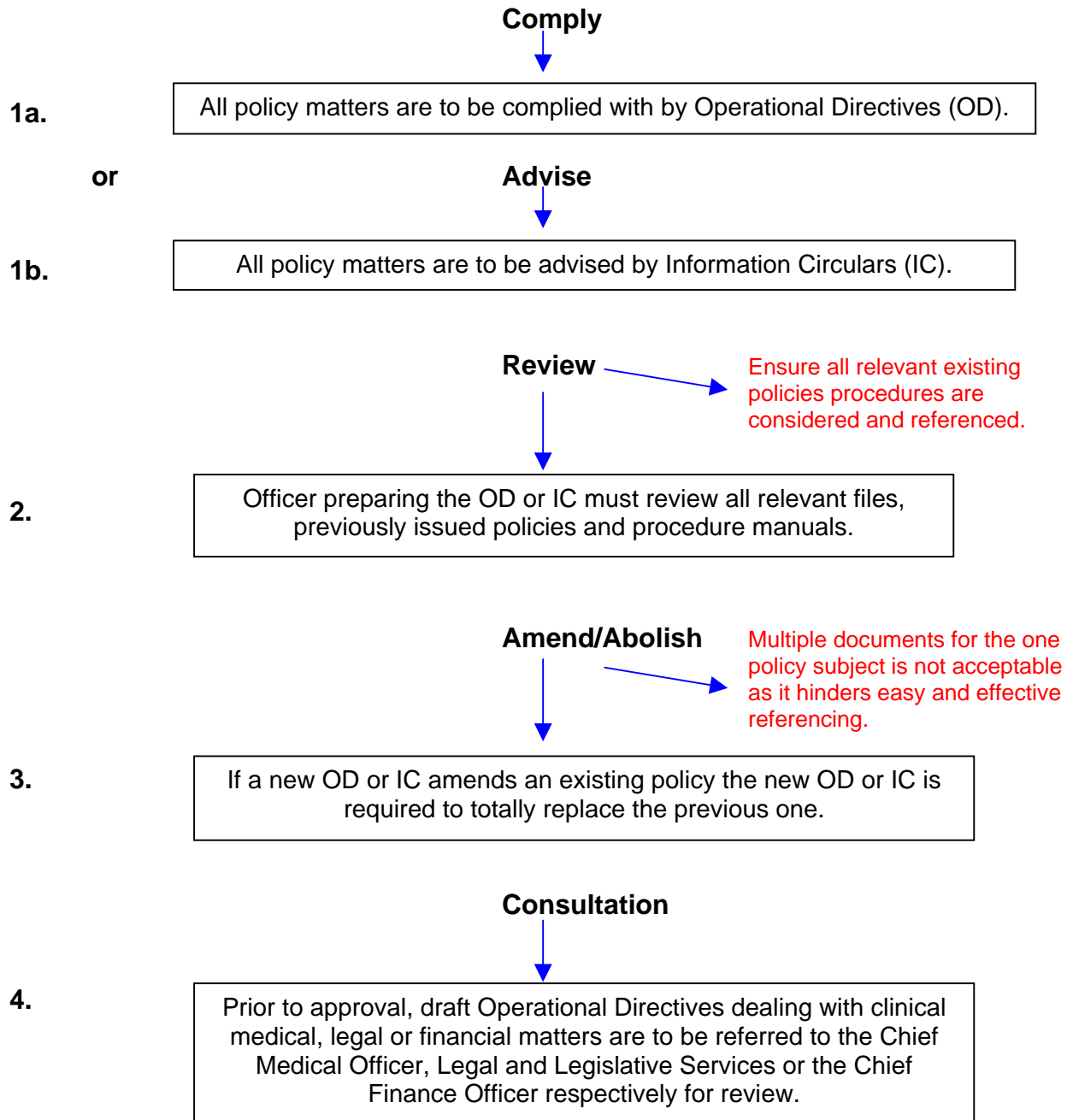
Executive Directors and Area Health Chief Executives are required to follow up overdue responses from their division/branch for Operational Directives, and are accountable for ensuring that Operational Directives remain current and relevant.

Archived documents

When an Operational Directive or Information Circular becomes obsolete, is rescinded or replaced, the status field on the electronic version of the document will reflect this change by showing *no longer applicable*. Documents no longer applicable can still be retrieved through the "Display" search function. .

The document cover page will indicate the date the document became obsolete and the reason for being obsolete or, if replaced, the new document number.

OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE and INFORMATION CIRCULAR PROTOCOL



Checklist

An Operational Directive should:

Please tick

1	Clearly state in the introduction the intent of the directive.	
2	Identify the problem being addressed.	
3	Provide information on WA Health's solution.	
4	Clearly state the action to be taken, along with their benefits.	
5	Be written in plain language and action orientated.	
6	A statement on the cover page of the Operational Directive that says, <i>"it is mandatory that public health organisations comply with this operational directive"</i> .	
7	Contain a one page summary as a preface to the document, if more than six pages.	
8	Refer to previously related policies or circulars.	



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia

OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE / INFORMATION CIRCULAR AUTHORISATION FORM

REQUIREMENTS

A completed and signed copy of this form must be included with a paper copy of the document to be issued, and be forwarded to the Corporate Information Unit, Information Policy and Support, Floor 3 A Block, 189 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004. In addition, an electronic copy of the Directive, in Microsoft® Word format, must be emailed to ciu@health.wa.gov.au

For further information, visit the Operational Directives or Information Circulars page on HOLII at <http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/> or contact the Corporate Information Unit on Tel: 9222 4339, Fax: 9222 2402, or email: ciu@health.wa.gov.au.

Please ensure all information is provided in full where required.

<p>CORPORATE INFORMATION UNIT USE ONLY</p> <p>OD/IC _____ / _____</p>
<p>Subject Terms:</p>

1. TITLE AND TYPE OF DOCUMENT (required)

- Operational Directive Information Circular

2. CATEGORY (required)

Select which category this form belongs to – tick one box only.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability & Audit | <input type="checkbox"/> General Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Program / Technical Bulletins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disease Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Preparedness & Management | |

OTHER – please specify: _____

3. DESCRIPTION / SUMMARY (required)

4. KEY TERMS (See Attachment C)

DRAFT

5. EFFECT PERIOD

Effective/valid from: ____ / ____ / ____ (required)

Effective/valid to: ____ / ____ / ____ (required)

Review date: ____ / ____ / ____ (usually 5 years)

6. SUPERSEDES (where appropriate)

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS/WEB PAGES (optional)

8. FURTHER INFORMATION / ENQUIRIES (required)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

9. MANDATE (where appropriate)

Please indicate if this Operational Directive is required to be issued under any specific legal instrument, eg. Health Act, etc.?

10. RESPONSIBILITY (required)

Please indicate the unit/officer responsible for the issuing of this document.

Officer Name: _____

Officer Position: _____

Section / Unit: _____

11. AUTHORISATION (required)

Refer to Delegation of Authority Schedule on HOLII: <http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/divs/audit/>

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

NOTES / FURTHER INFORMATION



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia

Key Words List - Functional groups and sub-groups

Corporate Administration Accounting	Personnel/Workforce Conditions of employment
Asset Management	Conduct and ethics
Communications	Employment screening
Fees	Industrial and Employee relations
Finance	Learning and development
Governance	Leave
Information and data	Occupational Health and Safety
Purchasing	Recruitment and selection
Records	Salaries
Security	Security
Clinical and Patient Services Aged care	Separation from service
Aids and appliances	Workplace planning
Anaesthetics	Health Protection
Baby or child	
Dental/Oral	
Critical care	
Governance and Service delivery	
Human tissue	
Imaging – diagnostic and interventional	
Incident management	
Infectious diseases	
Information and data	
Maternity	
Medical treatment	
Mental Health	
Non-English speaking	
Nursing	
Nursing homes	
Pathology	
Pharmaceutical	
Records	
Research	
Statewide and selected specialty services	
Surgical	
Transport	
Population Health cleaning	
Communicable Disease	
Disaster management	
Environmental	
Health promotion	
Infection control	
Pharmaceutical	
Waste management	
Water	