



RANGER ACTIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE

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Chief Ranger's Comments

The Branch of Special Programs and Populations is in the Division of Ranger Activities and has Servicewide responsibility for insuring that the agency makes every effort to assure that our facilities and programs are accessible to disabled visitors and employees. While these efforts are morally appropriate, they are in fact legal requirements as well. Accessibility is mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended in 1978 (program access), and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (physical access).

There are approximately 40 million Americans who have some type of major disability. When you add to those numbers the people who may be temporarily disabled (such as by a broken leg) and the elderly population, it is estimated that almost half (42%) of the people in this country would directly benefit from accessible design in our programs and facilities. That number increases significantly when you consider that all of us at one time or another may benefit from large print as we lose our reading vision or a curb cut when we push a baby stroller.

Obviously, we cannot make all existing programs and facilities that do not meet standards accessible immediately. But we can begin the process and work toward that goal. We are required to complete a Servicewide inventory of facilities and programs, eliminate immediately those barriers to access that we can, and establish a list of priorities and a schedule for the timely correction of the remaining barriers. Any new program or facility or any renovation of existing facilities must provide for accessibility. It is not a local decision or even an agency decision to declare accessibility "impossible." An official waiver must be granted before we can elect not to provide access in a particular situation.

We have too many examples of situations in which we are failing to deal with these legal requirements, particularly in construction or renovation. Official public complaints are being filed with increasing regularity. This action requires us, in many cases, to go back in after a project is complete and provide access at a much higher cost.

We are training regional and park "accessibility coordinators" through a comprehensive training course. One of their responsibilities will be to provide managers with information they need to comply with the laws and regulations. Don't "shoot the messenger" - the accessibility coordinator can save you money and lots of grief. Compliance with the laws is not elective; it is required and it also makes good sense.

This agency has the strongest staff expertise in this field in the federal system. The staff of the Branch of Special Programs and Populations is available to complement the guidance and assistance of your own coordinator. Please use these folks if you have questions or concerns before initiating a project where accessibility is a consideration. They can be reached at FTS 343-3674 or 202-343-3674.

NPS-9 Revisions

As most of you know, NPS-9, the Service's law enforcement guideline, has been under revision since 1986. Two separate task forces met to review field comments and incorporate changes into the guideline, and the draft version was subsequently reviewed by a number of managers and the Directorate. The final version went to the printers in late August; with luck, it should be out to you later this fall.

The guideline itself has been completely restructured. It now has three sections, with chapters in each section consecutively numbered. The new sections and contents are as follows:

- Section I, Chapter 1: Law Enforcement Program Direction

NPS-9 requires each superintendent to complete a written law enforcement needs assessment. This assessment is to assist managers in determining the scope and level of law enforcement programs required in a park area and to make informed decisions about commitments made to law enforcement programs.

- Section I, Chapter 3: Law Enforcement Authority

The authorization for use of the PPD (Park Protection Designation) has been removed. The Service no longer has the authority from the Department to grant this limited authorization, which was originally meant to provide temporary, transitional law enforcement authority until the Service could implement the (then) new commission system (General Authorities Bill designation) developed pursuant to DM 446.

The names of the two types of law enforcement commissions issued have been changed from "full" and "limited" authority to Level I and Level II respectively. The use of the term "limited" was troublesome to some assistant US attorneys, particularly when the concept of limited authority versus full authority came up in court cases. The powers granted by each commission remain the same, as do the basic qualifications criteria.

- Section II, Chapter 1: Law Enforcement Commissions

All discussions regarding the issuance, suspension, and revocation of commissions and the requirements for background investigations have been consolidated in this chapter. Information on special police deputations and boards of review have been moved to separate chapters.

The chapter identifies the use of the SF-86 as the basic form for requesting NACIC's and does away with the OPM Form 1474.

Commissions will no longer expire. As long as the holder meets applicable training and firearms recertification requirements, commissions will remain valid. The chapter also contains a discussion regarding invalid commissions.

The requirement for maintaining valid first aid and CPR certification as a requirement for a valid law enforcement commission has been deleted.

The record-keeping responsibilities for parks and regional offices for commission records have been strengthened. Regional law enforcement specialists are required to conduct an annual review of the status of all commissions. The annual law enforcement program report for each region must contain the regional director's certification that this review has been completed and that commissioned rangers who fail to meet minimum training and firearms qualification criteria have been removed from law enforcement duties until such training requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

- Section II, Chapter 2: Training Standards

The criteria for timeliness of law enforcement training have been clarified. A ranger who fails to meet annual refresher training requirements for a consecutive period of no more than five years may apply for revalidation of his or her commission after completing the stated minimum training requirements. A ranger who fails to meet refresher training requirements for a period greater than five years must repeat the entire basic training before becoming eligible to receive a commission. A seasonal ranger who receives basic training at an approved academy must be employed in a law enforcement position within three years of graduation or must repeat the basic training. If the break is for a period of less than three years, the ranger must complete a minimum of 40 hours of training, as determined by the regional law enforcement specialist.

The term "reduced light" has been defined for training purposes, and reads as follows: "Conditions that approximate the intensity and sources of illumination that are typically found during night time patrol operations in the park area in which the ranger is assigned." The option of using a flashlight in reduced light qualification courses has been deleted, but the requirement for semiannual reduced light qualifications has been retained.

The shotgun qualification course has been changed to reflect the change from the #4 buck round to the now standard #00 buck round.

The NPS-specific training requirements which formerly applied to candidates for special police deputations have been deleted. Candidates are required to meet their respective federal agency training requirements or applicable state training standards for peace officers.

- Section II, Chapter 3: Defensive Equipment Policy

The definition of "use" of a firearm has been revised to mean the pointing of a firearm at an individual, or any discharge of a firearm other than during an approved firearms training exercise. The mere drawing of a firearm is no longer considered use.

Guidelines and procedures for carrying a firearm aboard a commercial air carrier have been revised to allow commissioned rangers limited authorization to transport firearms aboard aircraft in accordance with FAA regulations and Departmental policy.

The NPS standard issue handgun has been changed to a six-shot .357 Magnum revolver with a four-inch barrel and adjustable sights. All new purchases must meet this standard. The standard ammunition will be the 110 or 125 grain SJHP in .357 Magnum. The standard ammunition for .38 special revolvers will continue to be the .38 special, 110 grain, +P+ SJHP. The guideline also requires that existing .38 special handguns manufactured after 1958 and in good functional condition should be replaced as soon as practicable, but no later than September 30, 1994.

The standard shot shell round has been changed from the 12 gauge #4 buck round to the 12 gauge #00 buck round.

Detailed specifications have been developed for standard leather equipment, which will be available later this winter for direct purchase from R & R Uniforms.

- Section II, Chapter 5: Cooperation With Other Law Enforcement Agencies

The special police designation has been changed to a special police deputation, and a deputation form has been developed based on a form used by the U.S. Marshall Service. Procedures for issuing these deputations have been modified in order to allow managers to more easily employ this tool. Provisions are made for both individual deputations and, in limited circumstances, for agency-wide deputations. The requirement for an underlying cooperative agreement remains in effect. Form NPS 10-61, "Special Police Deputation" is being developed and should be available concurrently with the effective date of the revised guideline.

- Section II, Chapter 7: Emergency Law and Order Funding

The chapter incorporates the provisions of Special Directive 86-6. It provides comprehensive, detailed guidance concerning the types of incidents that may qualify for funding and the procedures required for park and regional office staffs to request approval for funding.

- Section II, Chapter 8: Boards of Review

All guidelines pertaining to boards of review have been consolidated in this chapter. Provisions pertaining to the composition, functions and powers of a board and specific procedures for conducting boards of review have been expanded and clarified.

- Section III, Chapter 1: Criminal Investigations

The chapter on criminal investigations has been expanded to include more detailed guidance on internal investigations, undercover operations and the use of informants.

The recommendations of a Departmental Inspector General's report published in June 1989 regarding criminal investigations have been incorporated into this chapter. Requirements have been added for the planning of major criminal investigations, supervisory tracking of investigation progress, and written status reports by investigating rangers.

- Section III, Chapter 8: Use of Emergency Vehicles

The guidelines pertaining to operation of emergency vehicles have been revised to coincide more closely with 36 CFR 4.2. Limited exceptions have been made to the general requirement for activation of both visual and audible warning devices when exceeding the speed limit or disregarding traffic control devices.

The 30 mph above the speed limit restriction that applied to emergency responses has been removed. Rangers may exceed the posted or prima facie speed limit provided that the speed is reasonable for the conditions.

Guidelines pertaining to vehicle pursuits have been expanded.

- Section II, Chapter 9 and Section III, Chapter 12

New guidelines have been developed to address the issues of communicable diseases and post traumatic stress syndrome.

Drug Activity in the NPS

The following figures will give you some idea of the scope of drug-related incidents in the NPS this year:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Dollar Value</u>	<u>Arrests</u>	<u>Plants</u>
January	\$3,244	30	0
February	\$3,881	33	2
March	\$88,362,013	35	88,351
April	\$59,083,544	54	54,599
May	\$103,838,537	113	102,947
June	\$3,607,302	238	8,206
July	\$190,799,354	312	15,305
August	\$66,096,031	226	36,101
Total	\$511,793,906	1,041	305,511

One or two explanatory notes are in order. Although a significant proportion of the arrests occurred in three urban areas - Gateway, Golden Gate and NCR - the high dollar values occurred in non-urban park areas, principally Hawaii Volcanoes, Biscayne, Big Bend, Santa Monica Mountains, Great Smokies and Joshua Tree. On-going marijuana eradication efforts at Hawaii Volcanoes and a single, \$175 million cocaine seizure at Biscayne accounted for much of the overall monetary amount.

Fire Season

As you know, this was another big year for fires nationwide. Although there were some sizeable burns in the parks - particularly in the Everglades and the Southwest - most of the action this summer was in the national forests.

Nonetheless, 1989 already ranks as the third worst year for wildfire acreage on NPS lands (166,731 acres as of 8/30/89), about two-thirds the total acreage for 1981 (251,899) and a good distance behind 1988 (941,181). Spring and summer wildfires in Everglades and Big Cypress account for roughly 130,000 acres, and most of the remaining balance came from the approximately 20,000 acres which burned in Big Bend, Guadalupe, El Malpais, Carlsbad, and Saguaro. Because of the Secretary's ruling, there have been no prescribed natural fires this year; there were 142 such fires for 27,249 acres by late August of 1988. There were 87 prescribed burns for 40,800 acres by the end of August this year, however, a figure which is just short of the all-time high of 43,770 acres burned in 1981.

The Service also provided considerable support during the two nationwide --- mobilizations which occurred this year, with a peak of 743 people committed to fires in July and 977 in August. By contrast, the Service fielded 1,416 people for the lengthy mobilization which occurred between August and October last year.

Ranger Grades

The following table is a break down of the grades of the 3,186 permanent park rangers in the Service as of August 30th. The table also shows the change in the number of rangers at each grade since 1985, when there were 3,235 rangers in the NPS:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>9/89</u>	<u>9/85</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>9/89</u>	<u>9/85</u>
GS-1	1	4	GS-9	615	618
GS-3	25	49	GS-11	411	421
GS-4	140	244	GS-12	270	265
GS-5	675	781	GS-13	158	161
GS-6	39	267	GS-14	70	72
GS-7	712	292	GS-15	50	46
GS-8	9	3	SES	11	11

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