

INDIAN AFFAIRS MANUAL

2.1 Purpose. This chapter discusses the correspondence clearance process and identifies those Indian Affairs officials who are authorized to sign controlled correspondence.

2.2 Surname Process. In DOI and BIA, the “surname process” is used to record official concurrence with the content of a variety of written documents, such as testimony, written responses to Congressional hearings, comments on proposed legislation, correspondence, and reports. This process is designed to ensure that written information is accurate and that the organization provides consistent policy statements.

2.3 Required Surnames. No officer or employee is required to surname a document that s(he) believes to be incorrect or inappropriate. If the originating office and the surname official are unable to resolve their differences, the dissenting official should prepare a written explanation of the issues. That information is forwarded with the correspondence to the signing official. The official authorized to sign the correspondence determines whether the correspondence will be signed as written, or returned for revision based upon the opposing views.

2.4 Correspondence Clearance. Correspondence should be routed through offices with a direct interest in or responsibility for the functions, programs, or policies that are covered by the correspondence. While the identification of appropriate clearances is often a case-by-case determination, some general clearance requirements that are shown below:

A. Office Directors must surname all correspondence originating in their organization that is forwarded for signature by the Deputy Commissioner or any official in the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs.

B. Subject Matter Experts must review correspondence that addresses certain specific matters as shown in the following table:

Subject	Clear Through	
	Headquarters	Field
Accounting policies and practices	Administration, CFO	Accounting Officer or Administrative Officer
FOIA and Privacy Act	FOIA Officer	FOIA Coordinator
Fund distribution, appropriations actions, fund status	Planning, Budget and Management Support, CFO	Budget Officer of Administrative Officer
GAO and OIG audits	Audit and Evaluation, CFO	Audit and Evaluation
Interagency Agreements	Acquisition and Property Management (BIA or DOI, as appropriate)	Contracting Officer
International matters	Territorial and International Affairs	Territorial and International Affairs

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Subject	Clear Through	
	Headquarters	Field
Interpretation of laws or regulations, appeals, or other legal matters	Solicitor	Regional Solicitor
Legislative proposals	Congressional and Legislative Affairs	Congressional and Legislative Affairs
Organizational changes	Servicing Personnel Office, Planning, Budget and Management Support, and Human Resources Policies	Servicing Personnel Office, Planning, Budget and Management Support, and Human Resources Policy
Performance under grants, contracts, cooperative agreements or proposed amendments to such awards	Commercial: COTR, COR, and Contracting Officer Grants and Self-Determination Awards: Awarding Official	Commercial: COTR, COR, and Contracting Officer Grants and Self-Determination Awards: Awarding Official
Personnel actions	Servicing Personnel Office	Servicing Personnel Office
Proposed and final regulations	Information Collection Officer and Federal Register Liaison Officer	
Responses to media	Public Information	Public Information
Transfer or disposal of personal or real property	Acquisition and Property Management	Property Officer
Unfair labor practices or other official correspondence with union representatives	Servicing Personnel Office, Human Resources Policies	Servicing Personnel Office

2.5 Clearance of Revised Correspondence. If substantive changes are made during the clearance process, the document is re-routed for clearance. Documents that have only minor changes relating to style, grammar, punctuation, and the like, may be sent directly to the office that recommended the changes. In this case, the surnames and dates of the offices that had previously cleared the document are typed on the file copy.

2.6 Signature Authority. The following table shows the *lowest* organizational level at which various types of correspondence can be signed. Any official acting for a designated signer may sign, as may those at a higher organizational level.

Addressee(s)	Headquarters	Field
All Tribal Leaders	Deputy Commissioner	
All Tribal Leaders within a single Region	Deputy Commissioner	Regional Director
All Tribal Leaders within a single Agency	Deputy Commissioner	Superintendent

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Addressee(s)	Headquarters	Field
Individual Tribal Leaders	Office Director	Superintendent
All School Boards	Director, OIEP	
All School Boards under an ELO	Deputy Director, OIEP	Education Line Officer
Heads of National Indian Organizations	Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP	Regional Director
Chairman/Ranking Minority Member, Interior Appropriations Subcommittees	Assistant Secretary - PMB	
Chairman/ Vice Chairman, Indian Affairs Committee	Deputy Commissioner	
Chairman/Ranking Minority Member, House Resources Committee	Deputy Commissioner	
Members of Congress: constituent inquiries other than tribal	Office Director	Regional Director Education Line Officer
Members of Congress: tribal matters and policy concerns	Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP	Regional Director
Governors	Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP	Regional Director
General Public: Release of information requested under FOIA/Privacy Act	Office Director	Deputy Regional Director Superintendent Education Line Officer
General Public: Denial/Partial Denial/ No record responses to FOIA/Privacy Act requests	Deputy Commissioner Director, OIEP	Regional Director
General Public: General information	Office Director	Deputy Regional Director Superintendent Education Line Officer
Secretaries/Deputy Secretaries	Assistant Secretary	
Assistant Secretaries	Deputy Commissioner	
Other DOI Bureau Directors	Deputy Commissioner	
Other DOI bureaus' and other Departments' State/Regional Directors	Deputy Commissioner	Regional Director
BIA Regional and Headquarters Directors	Deputy Commissioner	Deputy Regional Director

2.7 Authorization for Auto Pen Signatures. The Deputy Commissioner, the Chief of Staff, the Deputies to the Assistant Secretary, and any officer acting for the Assistant Secretary may authorize the use of the Assistant Secretary's auto pen signature by completing the authorization record.