



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: STAFF REPORTS	Number <u>I-2</u>	<u>Effective Date:</u> Issued: 6/25/86 Revised: 9/15/97 7/03/07	Page 1 of 7
---	------------------------------------	--	--------------------

PURPOSE:

To provide document and documentation standards for the format and content of staff reports.

POLICY:

The staff report is a primary vehicle for communicating information, detailed issues analysis and decision recommendations to the Board of Directors, Board Committees, management and other staff. They provide documentation and justification in support of decision processes at both the policy and administrative levels. Staff reports are often included as attachments to Board of Directors' agenda dockets where expanded information and/or analysis is needed beyond the docket summary. *See also Administrative Procedure I-13, Schedule and Preparation of Board Dockets and Committee Agenda Items.*

PROCEDURES:

I. STANDARD STAFF REPORT FORMAT

- A. The Contra Costa Water District Interoffice Memorandum form is to be used for staff reports addressed to District management and staff (Exhibit A). Staff reports for Board or Board Committee items will use the same form, but will be labeled as a Staff Report (Exhibit B). A modified version is used for Board Representative and Liaison Committee Pre-meeting Reports (Exhibit C). A copy of the standard format for these forms can be found on the District's shared directory, under Forms/Staff Report Formats, as well as in the Administrative Procedures section of the staff website. The standard font for preparing staff reports and other District documents is Times New Roman, using 12-point type. Margins are recommended at one inch.
 - 1. Staff reports should be dated as follows:
 - a) Internal management/administrative report – date of final signature
 - b) Board item staff report – date of Board meeting
 - c) Board Committee (Committee) staff report – date of Committee meeting

- d) Board Representative and Liaison Committee pre-meeting reports – date to be delivered to the Board
2. Staff reports should be addressed as follows:
 - a) Internal management/administrative reports – the manager being informed or to whom a decision is being recommended.
 - i. If applicable, a “through” address should be included. For example, a report **from** a Department Head would be addressed **through** the Assistant General Manager before being sent **to** the General Manager.
 - b) Board items – Board of Directors
 - c) Committee items – Committee name (e.g., Finance Committee, Retirement Committee, etc.)
 - d) Pre-meeting reports – Name(s) of specific Board member(s) representing the District at this forum. (Remember that the full Board of Directors should be copied on staff reports that are addressed to individual Board members.)
 3. Staff reports should be signed by:
 - a) Internal management/administrative reports – the manager designated as responsible for the report being produced (may or may not be the report author).
 - b) Attachments to Board Meeting items – General Manager
 - c) Board Committee items – General Manager for all but the Retirement Committee, which are signed by the Retirement Plan Individual Trustee
 - d) Pre-meeting Reports to the Board – General Manager
 4. Subject line (in bold faced, capital letter type) should describe the key topic of discussion. This description should typically be no more than two lines.
 5. Initials of signer and author are capitalized below the signature line and initials of the individual who typed the report follow in lower case, (e.g., XXX/YYYY:zz)
 6. Attachments should be referenced in the body of the staff report and should also be listed at the bottom of the report after the signer/author initials. If there is more than one attachment, each should be designated using consecutive numbers, i.e., Attachment 1, Attachment 2, etc. If the staff report is itself an attachment, for example to a docket, subsequent documents should be referred to as "exhibits." Each exhibit should be designated using consecutive capital letters, i.e., Exhibit A, Exhibit B, etc.
- B. The body of staff reports will generally include four sections: Introduction, Recommendation, Discussion, and Fiscal Impact. Longer reports (more than two pages) will also include a Summary section following the Recommendation and preceding the Discussion. For reports where multiple alternatives were considered, a section on Alternatives Considered may follow the Fiscal Impact section. Section headings should

be all capitals, bold faced and underlined. Subsections may be included in the Discussion section for clarity. If used, they should be underlined regular font using "Title" case.

II. STAFF REPORT CONTENT BY SECTION

A. Introduction

1. The Introduction sets the stage for the remainder of the staff report by stating the objective of the report (e.g. to obtain the General Manager's concurrence). This section should provide a brief history on the topic to be discussed.

If the report is directed to the Board, it is important that the Introduction frames the specific policy issue/issues being considered. It should also reference any past Board or Committee discussions/decisions on the subject. .

2. Introductions should only be at most two paragraphs long. If more extensive background information is necessary to fully explain the subject, a "Background" subsection should be included at the beginning of the Discussion section. Conversely, if the staff report is straightforward and is less than one page in length, than the Introduction section is not necessary. Instead, an introductory sentence stating the purpose should suffice.

B. Recommendation

1. The Recommendation should clearly and concisely state what action is being requested of the decision maker(s). Statements should begin with an action verb (e.g., authorize, approve, deny, receive and comment, adopt, etc.) Do not use phrases such as "Staff recommends that...."
2. If multiple actions are recommended, then each should be prefaced alphabetically. [e.g., a) Authorize transfer of funds...; b) "Authorize execution of ...; and c) Approve ..."]
3. If the staff report is to be an attachment to a Board docket, then the Recommendation statements in both the docket and staff report must be identical.
4. If the staff report is an attachment to a docket and the recommendation includes adoption of a Resolution by the Board of Directors, then the Recommendation statement should be "Adopt Resolution No. XX-XX [insert exact language used in the resolution's title after the phase "Contra Costa Water District]." (Exceptions may be considered if the title is exceptionally long.)

5. This section is usually not required on pre-meeting reports. Instead a “**Key Items**” section should be inserted summarizing any important agenda items or messages that should be provided to the Board.

If applicable, the discussion of pre-meeting report agenda items can include a section identifying “CCWD’s proposed action” to provide the Board with a reference to staff’s recommendation.

C. Summary

1. A Summary section should be included when the entire staff report is more than two pages in length. This section should be brief. If the Summary is of equal length to the Discussion section, it should be re-evaluated. It may be that it is too detailed or it may be unnecessary.
2. The Summary section should summarize all subsequent sections, and should not include any unique information. [It is suggested that the Summary section be the last section written.]
3. The Summary section should be complete enough to give an understanding of the justification behind the report's recommendation without having to read the remainder of the report.
4. Avoid repeating verbatim phrases/sentences from the other sections of the staff report.

D. Discussion

1. The Discussion section provides detailed description and analysis of a given topic. It should be written with the specific audience in mind; technical jargon should be avoided or, at a minimum, be clearly defined. Value-laden embellishments should also be avoided.
2. Content of the Discussion must support the report's Recommendation. This section should focus on up to three key messages. If a decision is being recommended, the information and analysis should lead an individual to that decision. If the intent is to solicit review and comment, then the relevant facts and circumstances should be described in a way that leads to discussion and comment. [For example, potential options should be noted along with the associated pros and cons for each option.] If the item is for information only, the facts should be stated clearly and succinctly.
3. Reports addressing large capital investments or other major policy decisions should include:
 - a) Expanded background, if relevant and additive to the Introduction section

- b) Alternatives considered. These may be addressed in a separate "Alternatives" section as explained in Item F of this procedure.
 - c) Alternatives eliminated without detailed analysis, including basis for elimination
 - d) Comparative alternative analysis, including:
 - i. key assumptions
 - ii. evaluation (including present worth or other quantifiable analysis, as applicable)
 - iii. intangible considerations (e.g., potential key constituent reactions)
 - iv. sensitivity and/or risk analysis
 - e) Selected alternative justification (based on alternative analysis), including:
 - i. benefits of the recommended action
 - ii. reason for taking action in the recommended time frame
 - iii. potential penalties of not taking action and/or delaying action
 - f) Operational impacts
 - g) Tracking plan for determining if expected benefits are accomplished and/or operational impacts result
 - h) Schedule
4. In addition to narrative description and analysis, tables, graphs and maps can be used within the Discussion section, or included as attachment/exhibits.

E. Fiscal Impact

1. The Fiscal Impact section summarizes the expected cost, cost savings, and/or revenue effects of implementing the recommended action – typically from an overall District perspective. If costs span multiple fiscal years, the total cost should be provided along with a breakdown by each involved fiscal year. If there is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action, this should be stated in the Fiscal Impact section.
2. For recommendations that involve expenditures, their inclusion or non-inclusion in the adopted budget must be addressed or a recommended funding source identified. If funding is to be provided from the Operating or Capital Contingency funds, the amount currently available in that fund is to be noted.
3. For capital projects, status should be provided relative to the currently adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP). If the project impacts are not included in, or are different from the CIP, it should be stated that the changes will be incorporated in the next CIP update.
4. For complex Fiscal Impacts, use of a summary table should be considered for clarity.
5. A Fiscal Impact section is usually not applicable for the Board's pre-meeting reports.

F. Alternatives Considered (optional section)

1. When there are several viable alternatives and/or their analyses are particularly complex, a separate Alternatives Considered section may be used. Otherwise, the alternatives that were considered should be described within the Discussion section, as outlined in Item D3 of this procedure. The determination of whether to incorporate an Alternatives Considered section should be based on whether it would flow logically within the context of the full report.
2. Each alternative should be described in sufficient detail to fully explain its composition and the rationale for its rejection or recommendation. Comparative costs should be provided, if relevant. In addition, any significant non-quantifiable factors should also be discussed.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Use of personal pronouns (e.g., we, us, our, I, etc.) should be avoided in staff reports, particularly in reports going to the Board of Directors. The exception would be for references to third parties, such as consultants, claimants, etc. who may be referenced using pronouns once formally named.
- B. References to District staff should also be avoided in staff reports to the Board. If it is necessary to reference a specific staff member, it should be by title, not name.
- C. The Introduction section should not summarize the remainder of the report. The Summary section serves that purpose.
- D. Every staff report should have a clear objective supported by up to three key messages. It is recommended that the object and messages are approved prior to the drafting of the report.
- E. Information should be presented at a level of detail and technicality appropriate to the staff report's intended audience, but must be sufficient to support the reasonable acceptance (or rejection) of the recommended action.
- F. If information included in the staff report leads to additional, obvious questions in the mind of the reader, then these should also be addressed in the report. For example, references to selection criteria for selection of a consultant without listing the criteria.
- G. Acronyms and/or abbreviations should only be referenced after the full name or phrase is identified in the report. It should never be assumed that others reading the report will recognize the use of an acronym.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Staff preparing and reviewing staff reports are responsible for ensuring that the reports are accurate, complete, consistent with Administrative Procedures, and clearly and concisely written using proper spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax. All reports for the General Manager's signature shall be reviewed and concurred with by the preparer's supervisor, Division/ Department Manager and Assistant General Manager, depending on the organizational structure. All reports to the Board of Directors (with the exception of the Retirement Committee) will also be reviewed by the Executive Management Analyst prior to submittal for the General Manager's signature. It is the responsibility of those in the review process to provide comments in a clear, legible fashion.

APPROVED:



Walter J. Bishop
General Manager

- Attachments:
1. Format for Interoffice Memorandum Staff Reports directed to District Management and/or Staff
 2. Format for Board/Board Committee Staff Reports
 3. Format for Board Representative and Liaison Committee Pre-meeting Reports