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Agriculture

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TO: Agency Heads

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SUBJECT: Strengthening U.S. Department of Agriculture Visitor Policy

INTRODUCTION:

As a result of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Administrative Solutions Project (ASP), the following policy memorandum has been released to assist USDA Agencies with establishing minimum standards for processing visitors into USDA space.

The procedures in this policy are designed to assist USDA Agencies to strengthen USDA Agency and local facility visitor procedures and to monitor access of visitors while in USDA space. These procedures are not intended to be implemented for visitors who remain in public areas such as visitor centers, reception areas (the public facing side of service counters), or any other areas open to the public.

For processes and procedures regarding long-term foreign national visitor processes, a Departmental Regulation (DR) will be forthcoming with additional guidance.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

USDA welcomes visitors to its broad base of occupied facilities on a daily basis. These visits are vital to USDA in carrying out the many important missions of the Department.

Currently, there are multiple and non-standardized stove piped procedures for visitors throughout USDA's facilities. The purpose of this policy memorandum is to establish uniform minimum recommendations for agencies to utilize, to properly approve, sign-in, and monitor visitors while in USDA space.

This memorandum defines "visitors" as any individual that is not authorized to have unaccompanied access to USDA space. This policy covers all visitor categories (i.e., U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, and students).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

USDA Agencies: In accordance with this policy, within 90 days of this memorandum, USDA Agencies should review organizational structures to decide the best methodologies for the implementation of Agency visitor procedures (i.e. Agency-wide, regional, facility type, etc.). Recommended elements include the following procedures:

- Identify and document who can sponsor and sign-in visitors. This should be USDA employees or authorized individuals;
- Establish and document facility visitor hours. In addition, document a process if a visit needs to be approved for after-hours access;
- Inspect the visitor's official government photo identification before allowing them admittance (i.e. driver's license or passport);
- Require the visitor to sign a visitor's log and provide the following information: Full Name, Date and Time of Visit, Area Visiting (Room Number), Purpose of Visit, Sponsor Name and Phone Number, U.S. citizenship status (if No, then capture the last four digits of the Passport Number or Visa, issuing country, and country of residence), and departure time;
- Establish local escort procedures and how escorts will remain with visitors at all times;
- Establish access procedures for employees not in possession of their LincPass or other USDA Badge (lost, stolen, forgotten);
- Identify and document a process to sign-out visitors and collect visitor badges/stickers (if applicable) upon departure;
- Report suspicious activities or anomalies involving visitors to agency security personnel and local facility management immediately and local law enforcement if warranted;
- Restrict visitors from bringing alcohol into the building, even if it is intended to be a gift (18 U.S.C. § 930 and USDA DR 1630-001);
- Determine if visiting USDA employees or other federal employees need to follow visitor procedures; and
- Identify a process to account for visitors in the event of a building evacuation.

Strengthening USDA Visitor Policy

Page 3

Other suggested procedures that may be applicable at USDA facilities include:

- Developing a process to screen visitor and belongings (i.e., briefcase or backpack) for prohibited items (See Appendix A). Federal law prohibits the possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities, with the exception of persons otherwise authorized by law to possess such items (18 U.S.C. § 930);
- Issuance of a Visitor Badge or Sticker to each visitor;
- Establishing protocols for providing facility tours (if applicable);
- Identifying a process for frequent visitors (i.e., vending machine operators, industry partners, etc.) to include how their access will be monitored; and
- Posting signage to restrict visitors from taking photographs or video unless there is a specific reason and approved by local facility management.

If it is necessary for the visitor to return, all of the above procedures should be followed each and every visit.

USDA OHSEC: OHSEC, through the Physical Security Center of Excellence, is available to review and provide technical guidance to agencies on their development of agency specific visitor protocols and procedures.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact OHSEC at physicalsecurity@dm.usda.gov or 202-578-2258.

Appendix A: Items Prohibited from Federal Facilities

Published from “*An Interagency Security Committee Standard, February 2013*”

Prohibited Items

It is not the intent of this list to prohibit USDA employees and authorized individuals from possessing and utilizing items on this list needed to carry out their USDA mission.

Agency Leadership and local facility directors may allow the use and possession of equipment on this list if it is required to perform a job function for USDA.

A. Firearms and Projectile Weapons

1. Firearms or similar device that expels a projectile through the action of an explosive;
2. BB or pellet guns;
3. Compressed air guns;
4. Antique firearms;
5. Flare guns;
6. Realistic replica or toy firearms;
7. Spear guns;
8. Starter pistols;
9. Stun guns, cattle prods, dart-firing stun gun, and other electric weapon or devices
10. Ammunition, shotgun shells, or firearm cartridges, black powder, smokeless propellant powder; and
11. Slingshot.

B. Bladed, edged or sharp tools or implements

1. Axes and hatchets;
2. Bows and arrows;
3. Ice axes/ice picks;
4. Throwing stars (martial arts);
5. Knives, sabers, swords, daggers, and other bladed devices with a blade of more than 2 ½ inches in length; and
6. Razor-type blades such as box cutters, utility knives, and razor blades not in a cartridge, but excluding safety razors.

Strengthening USDA Visitor Policy

Page 5

C. Club-like items and striking devices

1. Billy clubs;
2. Blackjacks;
3. Brass knuckles;
4. Night sticks; and
5. Martial arts weapons, including numchucks and kubatons.

D. Destructive devices, explosives, or any chemical compound or mixture that has a property of yielding readily to combustion or oxidation upon the application of heat, flame or shock

1. Blasting caps or detonators;
2. Dynamite, nitroglycerin, trinitrotoluene, ammonium nitrate, and others;
3. Fireworks;
4. Gunpowder;
5. Hand grenades, mine, bomb, rocket, missile, pipe bomb, plastic explosives;
6. Realistic replicas of explosives or similar devices;
7. Explosive or expanding gases;
8. Gas torches; and
9. Flammable Liquids (i.e. gasoline, turpentine and paint thinner).

E. Disabling chemicals and other dangerous items

1. Mace, pepper spray, and tear gas, tear gas gun, or other chemical spray designed for self-defense;
2. Spillable batteries, except those in wheel chairs or similar devices used by a mobility impaired individual;
3. Spray paint; and
4. Poisonous gases.

Controlled Items

Controlled items are items that are considered potentially dangerous. Visitors are prohibited from bringing controlled items into Federal facilities. While not prohibited for use by Federal employees and contractors, they do represent a legitimate risk as they could be used as weapons. Controlled items that may require advance notification for entry include “tools of the trade” and “sporting equipment.” It is the responsibility of the Facility Security Committee (FSC) or Designated Official (DO) to establish a policy and procedure for the introduction and possession of such devices. This list includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Strengthening USDA Visitor Policy

Page 6

Tools of the Trade

A. Bladed, edged, or sharp weapons

1. Saw, including cordless portable power saws;
2. Scissors, metal with pointed tips;
3. Screw drivers (except those in eyeglass repair kits);
4. Drills, including portable power drills; and
5. Tools, including wrenches, pliers, and folding, multi-purpose utility tools.

B. Club-like items and striking devices

1. Hammers; and
2. Crowbars.

C. Destructive devices, explosives, or any chemical compound or mixture that has a property of yielding readily to combustion or oxidation upon the application of heat, flame or shock

1. Flares;
2. Gasoline; and
3. Aerosol sprays.

D. Disabling chemicals and other dangerous items

1. Chlorine and bleach;
2. Compressed gas cylinders, including fire extinguishers; and
3. Toxic industrial chemicals and/or materials.

Sporting Equipment

A. Club-like items and striking devices

1. Baseball bats;
2. Golf clubs;
3. Hockey sticks;
4. Lacrosse sticks;
5. Pool cues; and
6. Ski poles.