



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

CECW-ON

10 MAY 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Recreation Policy Letter 96-01 -- Visitor/Ranger Safety

1. This memorandum provides policy on a number of issues regarding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Visitor Assistance Program as it pertains to visitor and ranger safety. These policies are a result of a comprehensive program review conducted by the Visitor/Ranger Safety Review Task Force in 1995. The task force submitted their report of 54 program recommendations in September 1995.
2. The enclosed policy changes are in response to 26 of these recommendations and are effective immediately. These changes will be incorporated into the next update of the appropriate regulations and pamphlets.
3. Decisions in response to the remaining 28 recommendations will follow the receipt of reports from task forces conducting in depth review and analysis of those issues.

Encl

  
STANLEY G. GENECA  
Major General, USA  
Director of Civil Works

## Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes

ER 1130-2-400, Paragraph 4 (Project Mission) and Paragraph 5 (Program Objectives) are revised as follows:

4. Mission Statement. The mission of the Natural Resources Management Program is:

"The Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of the lands and waters at Corps water resources projects. Its Natural Resources Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.

In all aspects of natural and cultural resources management, the Corps promotes awareness of environmental values and adheres to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance and restoration practices.

The Corps manages for long-term public access to, and use of, the natural resources in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies as well as the private sector.

The Corps integrates the management of diverse natural resource components such as fish, wildlife, forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water with the provision of public recreation opportunities. The Corps conserves natural resources and provides public recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life."

5. Program Objectives.

a. The objectives of the Natural Resources Management Program are:

(1) To provide a quality outdoor recreation experience which includes an accessible, safe and healthful environment for a diverse population;

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## Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes Continued

(2) To increase the level of self sufficiency for the Corps recreation program;

(3) To provide outdoor recreation opportunities on Corps of Engineers administered land and water on a sustained basis; and,

(4) To optimize the use of leveraged resources to maintain and provide quality public experiences at Corps water resources projects.

b. To accomplish the program objectives, the Corps manages land and water resources in cooperation with other Federal, State and local agencies, quasi-public organizations and the private sector supplemented by volunteers, contributions and challenge cost sharing programs.

### ER 1130-2-400, Paragraph 12 a. (2) (Outdoor Recreation) is revised as follows:

(2) Reduce or eliminate public use conflicts by incorporating the management practices identified in Appendix E (Alternative Management Techniques) of ER 1130-2-420 or by applying other measures allowable under authority and policy. Project managers should conduct carrying capacity studies using the Natural Resources Research Program guidance contained in the publication "Recreation Carrying Capacity Handbook, Methods and Techniques for Planning Design and Management."

### ER 1130-2-400, Paragraph 12 a. (3) (Outdoor Recreation) is revised as follows:

(3) Establish a project wide cost effective program to rehabilitate recreational facilities whenever feasible to increase visitor safety and satisfaction while reducing O&M costs. O&M budget Feature Cost Codes 606.1 and 606.3 allow for justified levels of public health and safety at the least cost and Codes 629.1 and 629.9 allow for the insurance of public safety.

## Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes Continued

ER 1130-2-400, Paragraph 12 (Outdoor Recreation) is revised to include the following additional paragraph:

d. Night Closures of Day Use Areas. Unattended day-use areas will be closed at night if such a restriction on public access is considered necessary by the manager in order to provide adequate visitor safety and resource protection. Prior to any such closure, consideration will be given to alternatives that accommodate the continued authorized use of the facilities while providing the necessary levels of safety and protection. Users of those facilities will be fully informed concerning the details of any closure, and wherever appropriate, will be provided opportunities to provide input into such decisions.

ER 1130-2-400, Paragraph 18 (Sale or Storage of Alcoholic Beverages) is revised to include the following additional paragraph:

18. Sale, Storage or Restrictions of Alcoholic Beverages.  
(new title)

c. District Commanders have the authorization under 36 CFR Chapter III, Part 327.13 (Title 36) to prohibit the possession or use of alcohol at selected areas and projects within their jurisdiction. To determine the need for such restrictions, periodic joint natural resource management and security assessments will be conducted at all water resources development projects, with an annual visitation of 20,000 visitor hours or more, regarding the need to ban alcohol consumption/possession on project-administered lands and waters. Commanders will insure that initial assessments are completed by 30 May 1997. Additional assessments will be conducted as appropriate.

Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes  
Continued

ER 1130-2-404, is revised to include the following additional paragraph:

17. Security Measures.

a. Managers will comply with Army regulations governing the security and storage of funds, particularly AR 37-103, Disbursing Operations for Finance and Accounting Offices.

b. As a minimum, managers will consider the following options to enhance the security of personnel handling funds as well as safeguarding the funds themselves:

(1) Collect and deposit funds frequently to reduce the amount stored on-hand.

(2) Vary the times of collection and deposit to avoid developing patterns and becoming a target.

(3) Vary the routes to and from collection and deposit, if possible, to avoid patterns.

(4) Maximize the use of credit cards to reduce the cash stored on hand.

(5) Contract for private security to collect and deposit funds.

(6) Include collection and deposit of funds in cooperative law enforcement agreements.

(7) Ensure personnel collecting and storing funds work in pairs and have reliable communication equipment (radios or cellular phones) available at all times.

c. District security managers will assist operations project managers in assessing the criminal threat to their operation and recommending protective measures.

d. District security managers will review the security of personnel and funds during biennial physical security inspections.

Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes  
Continued

ER 1130-2-418, Paragraph 5 (Policy) is revised to include the following additional paragraph:

f. In addition to the enforcement of state or local laws, cooperative agreements for law enforcement services may be used for other related activities such as, but not restricted to, patrols in remote areas, serving bench warrants, fee collection and other services, as determined by the project manager. The activities included in an agreement are dependent on what can be negotiated with the law enforcement agency. In no case will agreements include the provision of water safety patrols or the enforcement of state boating laws.

ER 1130-2-420, Paragraph 5 (Policy) is revised as follows:

5. Policy. It is the policy of the Corps of Engineers to provide safe and healthful recreation opportunities while protecting and enhancing project resources. The protection of facilities or the enforcement of rules will always be secondary to the safety of Corps personnel, contract employees, and visitors. Managers and rangers will strive to be visible to the public, primarily to help and assist them, and secondarily, to enforce 36 CFR Chapter III, Part 327 (Title 36).

(Note: Paragraphs 5 a. and 5 b. remain unchanged)

c. The role of the ranger is defined as a Regulation Enforcer with full citation authority of 36 CFR Chapter III, Part 327. Available use of force options includes visual presence, verbal persuasion/detention and unarmed self defense. The authority of managers and park rangers is limited to the enforcement of rules and regulations as designated in Title 36 and does not extend to arrest authority or the enforcement of state and local laws, including game laws. This authority is applicable to:

(1) All water areas of any water resource development project administered by the Chief of Engineers, without regard to ownership of underlying land;

Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes  
Continued

- (2) All lands owned in fee by the Federal Government; and,
- (3) All facilities of any such water resources development project.

ER 1130-2-420, Paragraphs 11 b,c,d (Vehicles and Vessels), are revised as follows:

b. Manager and ranger vehicles and vessels may be equipped with a fixed spot light on the operator's side. Vehicles may be equipped with a single removable warning light which is acceptable to the states in terms of color and placement. Lights mounted behind the grill, which are inconspicuous to the public when not in use, are authorized. Fixed roof or external grill-mounted warning lights are not authorized. The purpose of this equipment is for visitor assistance and not the enforcement of state/local laws. District offices will periodically review the use of these lights to ensure compliance with this paragraph.

c. Managers may equip vehicles and vessels with a public address system and warning siren. The equipment will not be visible to the public and will be used with discretion in emergency situations. Exceptions may be made for vessels depending upon the size and design of the hull.

d. All manager and ranger vehicles will be equipped, at a minimum, with first aid kits, fire extinguishers, blood-borne pathogen handling kits, rescue throw bags, binoculars, camera and flash light. All vessels will be furnished with the same equipment except that they will have US Coast Guard and state-required safety equipment, marine-use fire extinguishers and/or pumps. Districts and projects may provide additional equipment for manager and ranger vehicles and vessels as required.

## Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes Continued

ER 1130-2-420, Paragraph 12 (Communications), is revised as follows:

12. Communications.

a. Managers will provide reliable communication equipment in support of natural resources management activities. Authorized communication equipment may include cellular phones and multiple frequency programmable scanning radios (fixed and hand held) with local/state law enforcement interface, state wildlife/boating officer interface, appropriate rescue/fire interface, weather channels, and separate frequencies for overlapping projects. Corps base stations may be located off project lands and local law enforcement agency base stations may be placed on Corps property, as necessary, to obtain reliable communications.

b. Managers will determine the most reliable communication system for their project. However, if radios are selected over cellular phones, project managers will ensure that a base station is staffed continuously while personnel are on duty in the field. If continuous staffing is impossible, cellular phones should be provided.

c. Park attendants will be provided with either telephone or radio communication system to enhance their safety as well as that of visitors. When warranted, park attendants may be issued portable radios.

d. The installation of public telephones at entrance stations, beaches, and other public use areas is encouraged to enhance visitor safety. Where feasible, telephones should permit the caller to contact the operator without depositing coins. A listing of appropriate emergency telephone numbers such as fire, medical, police, rescue, and Corps officials should be placed in recreation areas near the location of public telephones.

e. District commanders will ensure that surveys are conducted periodically to confirm that reliable communication equipment is available to personnel, is located in vehicles and vessels, and is in serviceable condition.

## Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes Continued

ER 1130-2-420, Paragraph 13e (Other Training), is revised as follows:

e. Other Training.

(1) All personnel performing visitor assistance duties must receive a minimum of 24 hours of personal protection/unarmed self defense, situation evaluation and tactical communication training within two years of employment. This training can be obtained through HQUSACE-sponsored courses (where available) or locally-sponsored courses. Local courses must strictly adhere to Corps authority and policy and must be approved by HQUSACE prior to implementation. Instructors must be fully knowledgeable and supportive of the philosophy, objectives and authority limitations of the visitor assistance program.

(2) Managers and supervisors will assure that individuals who perform Visitor Assistance duties are provided first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, blood-borne pathogen and other appropriate health training, and offered preventive inoculations in order that they be qualified to perform immediate, on-site emergency medical treatment to injured personnel and visitors. Employees shall receive the equivalent of Red Cross "Advance First Aid and Emergency Care" course. Increased first aid training up to Emergency Medical Technician Basic (EMT Basic) is authorized for a minimum number of selected permanent staff members at the discretion of the manager. Refresher medical training may be required to maintain certification.

(3) Obtaining preventive inoculations for blood-borne pathogens is a condition of employment for park rangers and other personnel with visitor assistance responsibilities who are hired on or after the effective date of this policy.

(4) To complement visitor assistance training, manager and permanent ranger personnel shall receive, at the district or project level, training on defensive driving, cultural resource protection, historic property protection, water safety, and boat licensing and operation. Where necessary, training in a second language other than English is highly recommended.

**Visitor Assistance Program Policy Changes**  
**Continued**

ER 1130-2-420, Paragraph 13 (Training) is revised to include the following additional paragraph:

g. All Natural Resource Management program staff shall receive training in accordance with this paragraph and EP 690-2-2, Career Development Guide for Civil Works Natural Resources Management Team Members. Project managers are responsible for ensuring that permanent, seasonal and temporary rangers with visitor assistance responsibilities receive the prescribed training. Temporary employees who perform visitor assistance duties and enforce Title 36 will receive the same visitor assistance training provided to permanent and seasonal rangers with similar duties.