



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Headquarters**



COVE POLICY LETTER # 2020-04 Rev 3

March 19, 2020
Rev 1: April 22, 2020
Rev 2: June 26, 2020
Rev 3: July 30, 2020
Expires September 30, 2020

SUBJECT: USACE Value Program Operation Guidance During COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

1. **PURPOSE:** Provide guidance for the continued operation of the USACE Value Program during COVID-19 travel restrictions to ensure compliance with federal requirements for Value Engineering.
2. **BACKGROUND:** The continuing spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in the immediate implementation of travel restrictions for domestic Department of Defense (DoD) travel as of March 11, 2020. These restrictions are necessary to preserve force readiness, limit the continuing spread of the virus, and preserve the health and welfare of service members, DoD civilian employees, their families, and the local communities in which we live. This restriction on travel is scheduled to expire on May 11, 2020, however, this date may be extended depending on the developments with the spread of COVID-19. **UPDATE 1:** DoD has reissued travel restriction guidance for DoD Components that will remain in effect until June 30, 2020. **UPDATE 2:** The Secretary of Defense recently put out guidance moving to a conditions-based phased approach to personnel movement and travel. Locations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if specific criteria have been met to allow for travel restrictions to be lifted. More details on this guidance and criteria can be found in reference (a).
3. **REFERENCES:**
 - a. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Transition to Conditions-based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Travel Restrictions" May 22, 2020
 - b. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Modification and Reissuance of DoD Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 – Travel Restrictions" April 20, 2020
 - c. Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Stop Movement for all Domestic Travel for DoD Components in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019" March 13, 2020
 - d. Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Travel Restrictions for DoD Components in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019" March 11, 2020
 - e. Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 4) – "Department of Defense Guidance for Personnel Traveling During the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak" March 11, 2020
 - f. Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, "Force Health Protection Guidance (Supplement 2) –

“Department of Defense Guidance for Military Installation Commanders’ Risk Based Measured Responses to the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak”
February 25, 2020

- g. DoD Instruction 6200.03 “Public Health Emergency Management within the DoD” March 28, 2019

4. **POLICY:** A key component of a Value Workshop is gathering Value team members in a common location for the duration of the workshop. This facilitates effective communication and eliminates distractions that would otherwise take place in a virtual or remote working environment. Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented Value team members from gathering together in a common location for extended periods of time. However, as the nation continues to recover and locations begin opening back up for business, new guidance has been issued to evaluate potential workshop locations on a case-by-case basis. With this new guidance, there now is a possibility that Value workshops could be held in the more traditional and preferred in-person format. Therefore, Value Officers should use the following order of precedence when evaluating the Value strategy for projects as we move forward:

- a. Conduct In-Person Workshop – The preferred course of action is to conduct an in-person workshop. Potential workshop locations for each project should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis utilizing the criteria outlined in reference (a). If the location meets the criteria to have travel restrictions lifted, the workshop should be held in-person. Consideration should also be given to the Value team members and the locations from which they are traveling. A backup plan to conduct the workshop virtually should be in place in case a change in conditions occurs prior to the scheduled workshop dates.
- b. Postpone – If a workshop cannot be conducted in-person, the preferred course of action is to postpone and reschedule workshops to a date after the expiration of the travel ban. This approach acknowledges the potential need to reconsider the focus and scope of the Value Study to have the greatest impact on the project at the time of the Study. This is especially true for high-dollar or high-complexity projects. If the study is planned early in design as required, there should be ample time to postpone the study by a limited amount of time.
- c. Re-Evaluate Strategy – If postponing the workshop is not feasible, the Value Officer should revisit the strategy that was documented in the Value Management Plan (VMP). Through discussions with the PM and PDT, the Value Officer shall determine if a Low Opportunity (LO) Scan/Bridge or LO-VMP Only approach can be used to address the VE requirement. LO-Scan/Bridge strategies can be used on all projects regardless of dollar amount with the approval of the qualified MSC VPgM. LO-VMP Only strategies can also be considered and approved by the qualified Regional Value Officer (RVO) up to \$10M; however, LO-VMP Only strategies for projects greater than \$10M require the additional approval of the Chief Value Officer (CVO).

- d. Conduct Workshop Virtually – If the above options are not feasible, then the Value Officer may conduct the Value workshop virtually. The following items should be considered/addressed in the pre-workshop planning stage:
 - i. Accessibility to VPN
 - If USACE personnel are Value team members, consider having all project documents downloaded to their computers ahead of the scheduled workshop so they do not need to rely solely on a VPN connection.
 - ii. Software
 - Select software that will allow the six-step job plan to be completed with participation from all value team members participating virtually.
 - iii. Web camera availability
 - All Value team members should be required to use a web cam to encourage and confirm participation
 - iv. Schedule and Duration
 - Give consideration that team members may be participating virtually from different time zones.
 - Hold to a schedule, and include breaks that account for participants from different time zones.
 - Consider lengthening the study duration to allow for facilitator and team member meetings or “check-ins” at the beginning and end of each day and after each workshop phase. These “check-ins” are to enhance communication between the VE team by ensuring a common understanding of daily goals, by allowing the voicing of any problems or concerns, and by ensuring team member understanding and buy in of the result of each phase.
 - Development of a contingency plan in the failure of communication or other software or technical component.
 - Development of a communication and conflict resolution plan detailing how communications will be controlled and conflicts resolved during the study.
 - Scheduling of a pre-workshop communication test or dry run with all team members to check communications, software and webcam functions and present the communications and conflict resolution plan.
 - Provide design documents and cost estimate to Value team members at least one week prior to the start of the workshop. This will allow the Value team to become familiar with the project and ensure better use of the virtual workshop time.
 - v. Cost
 - This workshop format may not necessarily cost less than in-person workshops, due to the considerations listed above.

All workshops conducted virtually will be tracked and evaluated by the Office of Value Expertise (OVx) to ensure that virtual workshops are meeting the USACE standard and adding Value to projects. The following information must be provided by the District Value Officer (DVO) to the OVx for each virtual Value Study:

- i. Before Workshop
 - Value Management Plan (VMP)
 - Workshop Dates
 - Team Structure
 - Study Cost
 - Estimated Year of Execution
 - One calendar invite sent to CDL-All-OVx@usace.army.mil for the duration of the virtual study with appropriate links and call-in information for potential real-time audit by OVx and CVO
 - ii. After Workshop
 - Completed Evaluation Tool validated by the DVO that the **required standards have been met** or exceeded, within **1 week** of **Consensus Meeting!**
 - Narrative After Action Review (AAR) or lessons learned (a simple e-mail will suffice)
 - Draft report **within one week of study completion**, with certification statement for OVx review and signature. An example certification statement has been included as an attachment to this COVE. **DVO must validate that the Value Study has met the USACE Standard (ie., min 24 Hr., Sr. CVS, etc.)**
 - Final VE Study Report **within 1 week** of **Consensus Meeting.**
5. **SUBMITTAL OF VMPs THROUGH END OF FY20** – The first step in the project screening process should be the completion of the VMP. This documents the coordination with the PDT to select the best value strategy for each individual project. Completing a VMP at project initiation ensures that the VE requirement will be addressed, scheduled and properly funded. Recent experience with tracking of virtual studies has indicated that VMPs are not always being developed prior to conducting the workshop. To ensure projects are setup for success and properly address the VE requirement, DVOs shall provide all VMPs for projects that identify any level study, scan or bridge VE activity where you plan to meet in person or virtually through the end of FY20 to the OVx at CDL-All-OVx@usace.army.mil.
6. **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:** SAVE International has also issued guidance on the impact of COVID-19 on conducting the Value Methodology. This guidance has been included for your consideration as an attachment to this COVE.

7. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Effective immediately, Value Officers shall use this guidance to ensure compliance with Federal Value Engineering requirements. **This guidance shall remain in effect through September 30, 2020.** With this new guidance, Value Officers should reassess those studies scheduled **through the end of September** and prepare a **primary and backup plan** for conducting those studies. The CVO can extend this guidance as needed depending upon developments with the COVID-19 virus and future guidance received from DoD. Any questions should be directed to the undersigned through the OVx at CDL-All-OVx@usace.army.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffery T Hooghouse', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffery T Hooghouse, RA, DBIA, CVS
Chief Value Officer (CVO) & SAO for VE
US Army Corps of Engineers, HQ



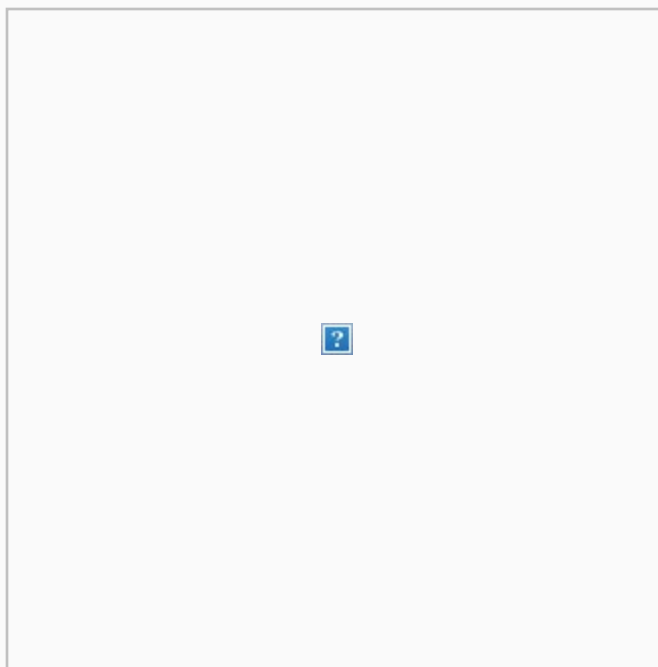
Professionally managed by [Tallev Management Group](#)

From: SAVE International

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 11:14 AM

To: SAVE Members

Subject: Impact of COVID-19 on Conducting the Value Methodology



Impact of COVID-19 on Conducting the Value Methodology

SAVE International, as the leader in Value, is reaching out to our members and constituents in

an effort to aid you and your organization related to conducting value studies and the current health challenges. As we are all aware, we are currently facing some unforeseen, uncertain and troubling times. SAVE would like to focus on this as a time to remind ourselves of the best next steps to keep everyone safe and still ensure that you have the ability to meet your program goals and schedules. We want to reassure you that everyone's safety is our highest priority and that our core values remain as strong as ever.

SAVE is staying optimistic and encouraging all of our members to support each other at this unusual time. With this in mind, we see SAVE as a part of the solution in helping you and your organization meet your program goals.

Impact on Traditional Workshops

SAVE's stance on value workshops is that workshops achieve greater success and outcomes when the teams come together face-to-face. This ensures face-to-face communication, collaboration and the opportunity to learn from one another. In an effort to support your organization and the continued use of the Value Methodology (VM), we support the use of virtual workshops for this interim period. However, SAVE perceives this as an opportunity to begin to accommodate the future realities of integrating technology into the way we do business and this includes VM workshops. We will be using this as a period to monitor and test the effectiveness of virtual workshops for the future.

Virtual Workshops

To ensure that your workshops remain successful and that the virtual workshops do not take away from the VM and the outcomes, we believe that very specific protocols need to be considered and in place. SAVE has identified generic protocols that we believe will help you in the development of more detailed scopes of work, protocols and delivery of virtual VM workshops. These include the following:

- **Keep the number of interaction points to a minimum.** Be aware that multiple interaction points can lead to a lack of participation and collaboration and an objective, as possible, should be to reduce the number of interaction points.
- **Plan for team's engagement full-time.** Full-time engagement, virtually, can be difficult at best. VM workshops are successful because of the full-time commitment of team members in the workshop. A mechanism needs to be in place to ensure that workshop members are engaged full-time. Within this protocol, you may want to identify additional ways to engage participants and allow longer breaks.
- **Prepare in advance for how to work in the Function Analysis phase.** Function Analysis and Function Modelling is at the core of the VM. This is a communication exchange process that identifies, tests and confirms functions with the entire team. Look for ways to engage your participants in a collaborative sense to ensure this phase can be used as it is intended, which is to aid the team in understanding the project, process or product under study. The team will potentially need additional time to review the end function model to validate and test the logic.

- **Plan how to build consensus at the Creative and Evaluation phases.** During Creativity and Evaluation, consider the need for consensus-building and protocols in place that allow for ensuring that ideas can be easily shared, disagreements can be raised and tools developed to get to consensus on key ideas and opportunities.
- **Prepare communication and collaboration channels for team members during the Development phase.** During the formal Development phase, team members communicate and collaborate during the process to ensure they can share impacts and ask questions. Plan for multiple opportunities during this phase where interaction between disciplines can be added to the virtual process.
- **Senior CVS team leader.** We would also recommend that virtual workshops be led by senior CVSs, as they have the ability to be agile whereas a less experienced CVS may struggle. We must continue to protect the integrity of the VM and ensure successful outcomes.
- **The mind-set of the CVS Leaders must change.** Facilitation skills will be even more taxed for virtual meetings and additional skills will be necessary. Additional roles and responsibilities may also need to be considered.
- **Technical Assistance.** The CVS leader will need a technical assistant to manage the virtual meeting throughout the length of the workshop. This will allow the CVS leader to continue to manage the workshop and not worry about technology. The CVS team leader should focus on leading the virtual meeting to be able to control progress and minimize disruptions.
- **Expand and change your VM Study agenda accordingly.** SAVE expects that additional time will have to be provided to the agenda. The many interface points created by not having the team all in one place will likely add time to the workshop. SAVE is an international organization and so are our workshops. The time schedules for workshops will need to become a point of discussion and agreement. A strong focus on compromising between work hour starts and stops will be important to ensure effective facilitation and team engagement. Consider flexibility in agenda development.
- **Selecting projects, products or services for a virtual workshop.** Virtual workshops are going to be challenging for many reasons. It is recommended that projects that are large and complex should not use virtual workshops. Be selective to ensure success.
- **Be mindful of how sensitive information is before committing.** Understand the level of sensitivity of the project, process or product under study. If this information is sensitive by nature, virtual workshops may not be a good choice or even allowed.

As discussed, SAVE has identified some of the challenges that need to be overcome by establishing formal protocols for virtual workshops. Please be aware that this will change many things – there will be a need for more time for getting prepared, collaboration and communication, as well as to manage outcomes. As an example, for the pre-workshop, communication protocols will need to be established for how the team will communicate online, identifying the acceptable technology platforms that are available to all attendees and logistics related to adequate internet, to name a few.

As mentioned above, there are areas during the workshop that will require additional time, and this may also include post workshop to integrate the team members in developing and reviewing each other's alternatives. Although virtual workshops can benefit the additional costs of travel, other time and costs may need to be considered. Trying to shorten the workshop is not recommended and will not lead to workshop success.

Certification Policy

Please be aware that this does not change the current SAVE Certification Program policy. Your organization has every ability to look at ways to deliver your programs with the VM as a key tool, but virtual workshops, for now, will not be able to be used in your efforts to gain your initial CVS certification. Workshop delivery is different than an individual's ability to lead studies in a team approach, which is the purpose of CVS certification. Workshop time is no longer part of CVS maintenance, so this will have no impact on maintaining your CVS certification.

SAVE is here to aid you in any way we can. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can assist you in developing your protocols and help you to better understand how to make your virtual workshops successful. SAVE's focus is to ensure that the VM continues to grow and prosper into the future.

Please contact us at info@value-eng.org if we may be of service.



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SAVE International Member

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The virtual Value Engineering Study documented by this Value Study Report has been coordinated with the Office of Value Expertise (OVx) in accordance with COVE 2020-04. In addition, the undersigned member of the OVx has verified this virtual Value Engineering Study has met the USACE Value Standard.

[Replace with OVx Member Signature]

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Office of Value Expertise