

**Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Manual**

**Effective Date:** March 6, 2012

**Version No.** 1

**Series:** Administrative

**Part 302:** Acting Officials

**Chapter 1:** Purpose and Guidelines

**Originating Office:** Office of Administration, Management Support Division (MSD)

**1. Purpose.** This chapter provides the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) responsibilities, standards, and procedures for automatic succession for all key BSEE positions and the provisions for temporary acting officials.

**2. Objectives.** To assure high-level direction and supervision on a continuous, uninterrupted basis.

**3. Authority.** Departmental Manual (302 DM 1, Designation of Acting Officials).

**4. Automatic Succession.** Provisions for automatic succession must be made in writing for the Director and other key supervisory positions down to the Division level and equivalent for both headquarters and field offices. The designated officials will act in the order indicated in case of the death, resignation, or absence of the respective principal official.

**5. Temporary Acting Officials.** There may be occasions when provisions for automatic succession are inadequate, and temporary arrangements must be made. Temporary provisions will be in writing and should be issued or approved by the official having supervision over or appointing authority for the position to be temporarily filled. The period covered should be specified; for example:

"In the absence of the (position title) from (month, day, year) through (month, day, year) or beginning (month, day, year) and until his/her return, the (position title) will perform as Acting (position title)."

**6. Title of Acting Official.** An official occupying a position in an acting capacity will use the title of the position occupied preceded by the word "Acting."

**7. Standards.** The following standards must be met in making provisions for automatic succession:

A. The Chief, MSD will annually request the office heads to submit their approved automatic succession designations in writing.

B. Office heads will also be required to submit revised automatic succession designations to the Chief, MSD when new reorganizations affect office titles or positions contained in their existing automatic succession designations (see BSEEM 101.1, Organization Changes).

C. Designations, whenever possible, will be by position title and not by an individual's name.

D. Designations will be based on the relationship of usual duties to those to be assumed, the qualifications of the employee to serve in the acting capacity, and the training to be gained by serving in an acting capacity.

E. Records should be maintained, including paper copies of electronic mail, of the dates during which and by whom the duties of the position are temporarily assumed. The documentation serves as evidence that the designated acting official had proper authority to act for the permanent official should the designated acting official's authority be challenged. Copies need to also be provided to individuals designated to serve as successors. A copy of automatic succession designations must be readily available for reference within the affected office.