

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: High Risk Operations

1. Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to establish a High Risk Operations assessment and control process that is intended to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and avoid Incompatible Groupings between occupancies within a facility under the jurisdiction, custody or control of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), through screening of new Federal Agency Space Requests and review of existing Federal agency space during environmental, health and safety, and fire protection (EHSF) facility surveys.
2. Authority. The Department of Labor, OSHA, established standards for Basic Program Elements for Federal Employees in 29 C.F.R. § 1960. 29 C.F.R. §1960.34(a)(7) of the standard requires GSA to “[e]stablish an occupancy permit program which will regulate the types of activities and occupancies in facilities in order to avoid Incompatible Groupings, e.g., chemical or biological laboratories in office space.”
3. Background. Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 668, requires Federal employers to provide a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. GSA’s Public Buildings Service (PBS) has the added responsibility of ensuring that facilities under the jurisdiction, custody or control of GSA are constructed, operated, and maintained in a safe and healthy manner.
4. Scope and Applicability. This order is intended to meet the occupancy permit program as defined by the aforementioned OSHA standard, and applies to all facilities under the jurisdiction, custody, or control of GSA. The requirements specified herein are required for all future Federal Agency Space Requests and existing Federal agency space occupancies. PBS staff are required to follow the procedures described herein.
5. Definitions.
 - a. High Risk Operations. Routine procedures, activities, and tasks that make up a Federal agency’s operation, and by their very nature, are intrinsically high risk. High Risk Operations consist of:

- (1) High Risk Laboratories,

- (2) Explosives and Explosive Materials storage, and
- (3) Firing Ranges, including shoot houses.

High Risk Operations **do not** include other space use, activities, or equipment, such as the following:

- (1) The installation and use of broadcasting antennas,
- (2) The storage of small arms ammunition (i.e., a shotgun, rifle, or pistol-cartridge for propellant-actuated devices, but does not include military ammunition containing bursting charges or incendiary, trace spotting, or pyrotechnic projectiles),
- (3) The storage of physical evidence consistent with an agency's mission and in alignment with the appropriate technical requirements and controls for the storage and securing of that evidence,
- (4) The storage of products that are flammable or combustible but which are stored in quantities and utilized in a manner consistent with common consumer product use (e.g., hand sanitizers, cleaning products),
- (5) The temporary use of a day box for the storage of explosive canine training aids within GSA controlled space for less than 12 hours,
- (6) Individual actions that may pose an intermittent health or safety risk to occupants in the agency space (e.g., limiting egress, interrupting good air quality, misusing electrical equipment).

b. High Risk Laboratory. A High Risk Laboratory is any space solely dedicated to biological, microbiological, chemical, or physical testing, analysis or research activities, that also includes, but is not necessarily limited to the use or handling of: oxidizers, toxic substances, peroxides, infectious agents, radioactive materials, and flammable substances. An example of a High Risk Laboratory is a biological laboratory with a Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) Biosafety Level (BSL) 1 to 4. A High Risk Laboratory commonly includes:

- (1) Security measures that prevent unauthorized access.
- (2) Separating the area from other spaces with a fire barrier having a fire-resistance rating of not less than one hour.
- (3) Protecting the area with an automatic extinguishing system (e.g., automatic sprinkler system).
- (4) A dedicated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system that does not mix with other areas of the building and has no recirculated air (i.e., 100% pass-through) and operates at a negative pressure relative to the rest of the facility.

(5) Specialized mechanical systems (e.g., ducted laboratory exhaust fume hoods or bio-safety cabinets with no recirculated air).

(6) Specialized plumbing systems (e.g., compressed gas lines, chemical waste traps, sink aspirators, eyewash stations, or emergency showers).

(7) The storage and/or regular use of reagents, solvents, chemicals, or compressed gasses (e.g., cylinders or piping).

High Risk Laboratories **do not** include:

(1) Office space,

(2) Storage space,

(3) Warehouse space,

(4) Or similarly constructed space used by an agency to perform limited laboratory support activities, such as sample collection, preparation, and test kit assays.

Such operations are not considered High Risk Laboratories even when they include partial space renovation or the use of some small amounts of chemical reagents or portable equipment for testing, sampling, or both.

c. Explosive and Explosive Materials. Any chemical compound mixture, or device, the primary or common purpose of which is to function by explosion. Explosives and Explosive Materials include, but are not limited to, the following materials:

(1) Dynamite

(2) Black Powder

(3) Pellet Powder

(4) Initiating explosives

(5) Detonators

(6) Detonating Cord

(7) Igniters

(8) Igniting Cord

(9) Emulsion Explosives

(10) Safety Fuses

(11) Water Gel

(12) Blasting Agent

(13) Squibs

(14) Other Similar High Explosives

d. Firing Range. A training facility designed specifically for small arms ammunition weapons qualifications using live-fire, electronic or eco-friendly ammunition. Ranges are used exclusively by law enforcement agencies for the purpose of proficiency testing and certification. For the purposes of this policy, a shoot house is also viewed as another form of firing range.

e. Incompatible Groupings. Federal agency operations that are intrinsically high risk and have not been mitigated through EHSF controls, such that they pose an ongoing threat of injury or illness to other occupants within the same facility. Incompatible Groupings may occur when High Risk Operations are located in space not designed for such purposes. Some examples could include, but are not limited to:

(1) A High Risk Laboratory separated by other parts of the building with walls that are not fire-rated.

(2) Explosives or Explosive Materials storage in a facility that is not protected by physical security measures to prevent unauthorized access.

(3) A Firing Range exhaust vent located next to the air intake for a facility.

f. Federal Agency Space Request. A space request, from a Federal agency to GSA (preferably 30 to 42 months in advance of an occupancy expiration), that is processed by the PBS Office of Portfolio and Customer Engagement's Regional Planning Manager (RPLM) as a Project using the Client Project Agreement (CPA). The space request can be new to GSA's space inventory or one received in advance of an existing occupancy expiration.

g. Occupancy Planning. The initial phases of a Federal Agency Space Request whereby the RPLM documents the existing agency occupancy and proposes an initial solution for the Federal customer agency. The RPLM takes into account best practices, customer engagement information, and customer intelligence, in proposing an initial space solution. This first phase is documented in Part 1 of the CPA. During the completion of Part 1, the RPLM asks the Federal agency whether the request involves a High Risk Operation. The Federal agency's answer is noted on the CPA. The proposal is then further refined in coordination and consultation with the Federal agency, incorporating new, relevant customer information. The proposed solution is considered complete once it is mutually agreed to and signed by GSA and the Federal agency. The RPLM then completes Part 2 of the CPA, which is the next phase of planning. The RPLM begins completion of the GSA Form 12002 for any High Risk Operation noted in Part 1 of the CPA.

h. Project. As used in this directive, Project means the entire space planning and Project Management phases involved in meeting a Federal Agency Space Request.

i. Project Management. The final phases of the Federal Agency Space Request follow the completion of the space planning phases. Project Management moves the Project through further requirements development to final Project completion. Project Management proceeds with the assignment of a Project Manager, who assembles a Project Management team. The team further develops the customer requirements package for final Project execution and completion. The CPA and related attachments move with the Project from planning through Project Management. For High Risk Operations, as indicated in the CPA (including GSA Form 12002), the Project Management team shall include a Regional EHSF program office representative(s). The team shall include, in the Project, those Technical Requirements necessary to avoid Incompatible Groupings when developing the final Federal agency requirements package. The Project Management team completes and signs the GSA Form 12002 once the High Risk Operation Technical Requirements have been reviewed and accepted by the team and the Federal agency. The Project then proceeds through execution and final completion, whether for leased or Federal space.

j. Technical Requirements. For High Risk Operations, the Technical Requirements are the minimum components in the Project scope necessary to prevent Incompatible Groupings within the facility of the Project. High Risk Operation Technical Requirements shall either be provided by the Federal agency or by the Regional EHSF program office representative(s) on the Project Management team.

6. Cancellation. PBS 1000.4A, dated October 6, 2021, is hereby canceled by this Order, PBS 1000.4B.

7. Policy. All new Federal Agency Space Requests and existing agency space occupancies, under the jurisdiction, custody or control of GSA shall be reviewed for High Risk Operations. Any identified High Risk Operation shall be subject to Technical Requirements or risk mitigation requirements, as needed, to prevent Incompatible Groupings within the associated facility, for new and existing occupancies, respectively. The flowchart in Appendix A illustrates the process described below.

a. Federal Agency Space Requests. Any High Risk Operation(s) for a Federal Agency Space Request shall be identified and addressed in the space planning and Project Management phases as part of the CPA.

(1) When there is a Federal Agency Space Request, the RPLM shall ask the Federal agency whether their request involves a High Risk Operation and record the response in Part 1 of the CPA. A response of "no" means there is no High Risk Operation and therefore requires no further action. For any response of "yes", the RPLM must complete Part A of the GSA Form 12002 and retain this form as an attachment to the CPA.

(2) Once Occupancy Planning is completed, the GSA Form 12002 must move with the CPA to Project Management.

(3) The Project Manager must include Regional EHSF program office representative(s) on their team.

(4) The Project Manager, Regional EHSF program office representative(s), and Federal agency need to collaborate to identify the minimum Technical Requirements necessary to prevent Incompatible Groupings within the facility of the Project.

(5) The final Technical Requirements, agreed upon by the Project Management team and the Federal agency, must then be incorporated into the final Project scope.

(6) The Project Manager and Regional EHSF program office representative(s) on the Project Management team must complete and sign the GSA Form 12002.

(7) The Project must then proceed to completion with the High Risk Operation Technical Requirements included.

b. Existing Federal Agency Space. Any High Risk Operation(s) in existing Federal agency space shall be evaluated through periodic GSA facility risk management surveys or inspections. Any High Risk Operation determined to be an Incompatible Grouping for the facility shall result in collaboration between GSA and the responsible Federal agency to resolve the underlying hazards or conditions.

(1) The Regional EHSF program office, prior to scheduling a GSA Risk Management EHSF facility survey or inspection, shall perform a records review to identify any facility known to contain a High Risk Operation. The records review may include, but is not necessarily limited to, previous EHSF facility survey reports or inspections and information from the GSA REXUS and KAHUA applications.

(2) The Regional EHSF program office shall schedule an EHSF facility survey of any facility with an identified High Risk Operation, that has not been previously evaluated for Incompatible Groupings, as soon as practicable.

(3) The Regional EHSF program office shall work with applicable PBS business lines and the Federal agency to ascertain whether any identified High Risk Operations are incompatible with other occupancies in the facility. To complete this determination, it may be necessary to gain access and inspect Federal agency space and to receive operational information from the Federal agency.

(4) The Regional EHSF program office shall prepare recommendations for mitigating underlying hazards or conditions responsible for incompatibility of any existing High Risk Operation determined to be an Incompatible Grouping. These recommendations must be shared with the Federal agency and GSA Facility Manager or Lease Administration Manager.

(5) GSA will work with the Federal agency to fully mitigate hazards or conditions, thereby resulting in the High Risk Operation being compatible in the facility.

c. Dispute Resolution. If GSA and the Federal agency are unable to agree on the minimum Technical Requirements needed to either avoid an Incompatible Grouping for new space or to mitigate hazards or conditions for existing occupancies, then both agencies shall escalate the dispute to their respective regional leadership and, as needed, to their national leadership, to reach agreement on the minimum requirements. Escalation within GSA shall be first to the PBS Regional Commissioner, and then to the PBS Commissioner. If no agreement can be reached, GSA and the Federal agency shall explore other occupancy options, including but not necessarily limited to:

- (1) Moving the Federal agency to a single occupancy facility,
- (2) GSA denying the Federal agency request for the new space request features that involve High Risk Operations,
- (3) Relocating the existing Federal agency to another location where the High Risk Operation does not pose an incompatibility, or
- (4) Federal agency withdrawal of the High Risk Operation space request.

d. Recordkeeping. All completed CPAs and GSA Form 12002s shall be retained in KAHUA, for all customer space projects. For existing occupancies, GSA's IRIS FMA application shall be used to validate High Risk Operations as EHSF facility surveys are completed. High Risk Operations identified in KAHUA and IRIS FMA will be recorded in GSA's OASIS application or the current system of record. The Program Audit section below outlines the manual process of updating OASIS, as these IT applications are not integrated.

e. Program Audit. Upon issuance of this Order, to ensure compliance with the procedures described herein, every six months, the PBS Office of Facilities Management (OFM), Facility Risk Management Division (FRMD), will randomly review: (1) 20% of completed CPAs, along with any associated GSA Form 12002s, completed within the past six months in KAHUA; and (2) all EHSF facility surveys completed within the past six months in IRIS FMA.

(1) The FRMD will randomly select 20% of each Region's completed CPAs to review, but in no instance will less than 2 CPAs be reviewed per Region (when available).

(2) If 50% or more of a Region's reviewed CPAs are noncompliant with this policy, then the FRMD will recommend actions for that Region to improve compliance with this directive. Actions may include additional training or procedural modifications to ensure that GSA Form 12002s are completed for new and renewed space requests.

(3) The FRMD will provide the program audit results to the PBS Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement to update OASIS, or the current system of record, and to reconcile any discrepancies in the recording of High Risk Operations.

(4) As part of the audit, the FRMD will review information associated with completed EHSF facility survey conditions in IRIS FMA to ensure Regions have implemented any feasible interim controls and developed abatement plans to mitigate or eliminate risks associated with any identified High Risk Operations.

f. Responsibilities. The Project Management team's responsibilities may extend beyond the offices listed below to other GSA or PBS offices whenever they are responsible for Federal agency Project Management.

(1) PBS OFM is responsible for:

(a) Issuance of this policy and all subsequent updates,

(b) Providing national guidance and annual training to appropriate PBS Facilities Management, Portfolio Management, and Leasing employees who have a role in this process, as described herein, in support of this policy,

(c) Supporting the PBS Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement in communicating the details and responsibilities of this policy to all Federal agencies through existing outreach,

(d) Auditing this policy as described in the Program Audit section above.

(2) PBS Regional EHSF program office representatives are responsible for:

(a) Participating on the Project Management team for any Project that involves a High Risk Operation,

(b) Reviewing Technical Requirements for High Risk Operations, provided by the Federal agency, to determine whether they avoid an Incompatible Grouping,

(c) Providing minimum Technical Requirements, to the Project Management team, to avoid an Incompatible Grouping in instances where the Federal agency provides no or insufficient Technical Requirements,

(d) Completing and signing GSA Form 12002, once the minimum Technical Requirements for the High Risk Operation are accepted by the Project Management team and the Federal agency and included in the final Project package.

(3) PBS Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement and RPLMs are responsible for the following:

(a) Ascertaining from the Federal agency whether any Federal agency space request involves a High Risk Operation during the completion of the CPA,

(b) Initiating completion of the GSA Form 12002 for Projects that involve a High Risk Operation,

(c) Ensuring the GSA Form 12002 is passed to the Project Manager following Project planning,

(d) Conducting outreach to Federal agencies on the specifics of this policy, with support from OFM.

(e) Updating High Risk Operations records in the OASIS application or current system of record.

(4) PBS Office of Design and Construction and Regional Project Managers are responsible for ensuring the following (for each Project in a Federal facility that has a High Risk Operation as indicated in the CPA planning package and associated GSA Form 12002):

(a) Including a Regional EHSF program office representative(s) in the Project Management team,

(b) Ensuring that minimum Technical Requirements for High Risk Operations are either received from the Federal agency or provided by the Regional EHSF program office representative(s),

(c) Including the final Technical Requirements, once accepted by the Federal agency and GSA, in the Project scope of work and the GSA Form 12002 is signed by the Project Manager.

(5) The PBS Office of Leasing and Regional Project Managers are responsible for ensuring the following (for each new Project or action in a leased facility that has a High Risk Operation as indicated in the CPA planning package and associated GSA Form 12002):

(a) Including Regional EHSF program office representative(s) in the Project Management team,

(b) Ensuring that minimum Technical Requirements for the High Risk Operation are either received from the Federal agency or provided by the Regional EHSF program office representative(s),

(c) Including the final Technical Requirements, once accepted by the Federal agency and GSA, in the Project lease requirements and the GSA Form 12002 is signed by the Project Manager.

8. Revision. The following are changes from PBS 1000.4A:

- a. Clarified the definition and provided examples of Incompatible Groupings in section 5.e.
- b. Clarified the definition of High Risk Laboratory in section 5.b.
- c. Provided a definition and examples for Explosive and Explosive Materials in section 5.c.
- d. Provided a definition of Firing Range in section 5.d.
- e. Clarified Recordkeeping to identify IT applications used to document High Risk Operations in section 7.d.
- f. Clarified the Program Audit process and documentation in section 7.e.
- g. Replaced “biannual” with “every six months” for clarity in section 7.e.
- h. Clarified training requirements, audience, and frequency in section 7.f(1)(b).
- i. Added responsibility for PBS Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement to update High Risk Operations records in the OASIS application or current system of record, in section 7.f(3)(e).

9. Signature.

/S/
NINA M. ALBERT
Commissioner
Public Buildings Service

APPENDIX A. Process for Reviewing High Risk Operations in New Federal Agency Space Requests

