



## ***EPA Quality Assurance Field Activities Procedure*** **Frequently Asked Questions**

### To whom does this Directive apply?

The [Quality Assurance Field Activities Procedure \(QAFAP\)](#) applies to all EPA employees responsible for field activities in support of EPA's mission. It applies to all EPA organizations and their sub-organizations (this includes but is not limited to an office, region, national center, or laboratory) whose EPA employees conduct field activities.

### Is there applicability to non-EPA organizations?

The QAFAP does not apply to non-EPA organizations such as contractors or grantees unless these requirements are explicitly stated and agreed upon in the extramural agreement.

### What is the purpose?

The QAFAP supports the implementation of EPA's [Environmental Information Quality Policy](#) and [Environmental Information Quality Procedure](#). It describes the EPA's Quality Program requirements for field activities and provides implementation instructions for a sustainable management system. It describes all ten elements needed to implement EPA Quality Program requirements unless an organization applies for and receives an approved waiver from the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Field activities are defined as activities conducted by EPA employees that require the collection of observations, samples, or other environmental information in support of EPA programs, Executive Orders, regulations, or environmental laws at a site or location to include, but not be limited to a facility, water body, or wetland.

### Why does EPA have the Quality Assurance Field Activities Procedure Directive?

The Regional Science and Technology Directors established a Field Operations Group (FOG) to promote national consistency among the Agency's field activities. The FOG developed ten operational guidelines, i.e., *Field Operations Group Operational Guidelines for Field Activities*, to ensure consistency in managing field practices and to reduce potential vulnerabilities. The FOG Guidelines are based on best practices for field activities as determined by EPA field groups, EPA quality requirements, and concepts of quality management systems established by the International Organization for Standardization. In March 2013, the Acting EPA Administrator issued a memorandum, *Consistent Field Operations at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*. In this memorandum, the Acting EPA Administrator requested that all EPA organizations conducting field activities implement the ten FOG Guidelines by February 15, 2016. Since the FOG Guidelines are based on EPA's existing quality requirements, these Guidelines were issued as a Procedure under the existing Quality Policy.



This Procedure has now been revised after completing the five-year review and comment process.

When does the directive go into effect?

The directive went into effect on **July 01, 2025**, when it was signed by the EPA CIO.

How do I implement this directive?

Each EPA organization conducting field activities shall define the scope and applicability of this Procedure and document implementation of this Procedure by incorporating it into the organization's Quality Management Plan and standard operating procedures, or other applicable controlled documents or program-specific guidance. This Procedure is not required for EPA programs whose primary goal is administrative or educational, including demonstration activities and volunteer monitoring.

Is this directive in addition to existing quality requirements?

The revised QAFAP replaces the *EPA QA Field Activities Procedure, CIO 2105-P-02.1*.

Why does the format of this directive differ from the past version?

This directive is written in the current Office of Mission Support IT/IM directives template.

Are there any EPA documents or training to assist in meeting this directive?

Communication documents consist of: Frequently Asked Questions, memorandum transmittal from the EPA Chief Information Officer to the Information Management Officers (IMOs), one-page information sheet, and updates to the CIO News Brief and Administrative Updates. Also, Train-the-Trainer slides will be provided to QA Managers (QAMs). QAMs are responsible for providing organization-specific training.