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1.0 PURPOSE

These guidelines establish the process for ensuring that information disseminated by TVA meets appropriate quality standards and shall be effective October 1, 2002.

Persons affected by information disseminated by TVA are provided a means to seek and obtain corrections to information that they believe fails to meet the quality standards established herein. An administrative appeal process is provided to resolve disagreements between TVA and persons claiming to be affected by disseminated information.

These guidelines also establish annual reporting requirements for providing a summary of the number, nature, and resolution of corrections requested by affected persons.

2.0 SCOPE

All TVA organizations that produce information to be disseminated to the public are subject to these guidelines.

3.0 INSTRUCTIONS

3.1 Review for Quality

3.1.1 Information of All Types

- A. Information, of all types, disseminated to the public in any medium shall be reviewed to ensure it is accurate, clear, complete, reliable and unbiased. The review shall also confirm that the information is presented in the proper context and is useful to the public.
- B. Information which is not deemed by TVA to be influential scientific, financial or statistical information as defined herein shall be reviewed by the group producing the information.
- C. Following review, information shall be presented to TVA management for confirmation that TVA's expectations have been achieved.
- D. All approved information is prepared by TVA Communications or the organization responsible for publication. Prior to release, the author will confirm that the information has not been corrupted by the preparation process.
- E. Upon author's release, the information is disseminated.

3.1.2 Influential, Scientific, Financial or Statistical Information

- A. The level of objectivity for influential scientific, financial or statistical information will be considered acceptable if data and analytic results have been subjected to an approach outlined in the information owner's review procedure. Approaches in use at TVA include external independent peer review, internal peer review, internal formal verification of processes and internal procedures for quality control of collected data.
- B. The review of influential scientific, financial or statistical information shall confirm that the original and supporting data have been generated, and the analytic results have been developed, using sound statistical and research methods. Data and methods shall be transparent (see definition) to facilitate reproducibility by qualified third parties.

- C. Where appropriate, data should have full, accurate, and transparent documentation.
- D. Influential scientific, financial or statistical information shall be subject to the process in §§ 3.1.1.C-E above.

3.1.3 Assuring Integrity of Disseminated Information

- A. Integrity refers to the security of information. Organizations responsible for providing information to the public in any form or manner shall ensure that information is protected from unauthorized access or revision.
- B. Web based information is protected from corruption or falsification.
- C. Publication of information shall be managed to ensure that information is not intentionally or inadvertently compromised prior to release. The final version of information shall be reviewed and, when appropriate, confirmation of its objectivity will be documented prior to release to the public.

3.2 Processing Requests for Corrections from Affected Persons

- A. TVA Communications, through its internet home page, www.tva.gov/infoquality, shall provide instructions for persons who claim to be affected by information disseminated by TVA to seek and obtain, where appropriate, correction of such information in a timely manner. The process for requesting correction shall also be obtainable through voice request via TVA phone operators and through written requests to TVA's general corporate office mail address, 400 West Summit Hill Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee 37922. The request should clearly identify the disseminated information asserted to be incorrect.
- B. A person claiming to be affected by what he or she believes to be information which does not meet these guidelines must request a correction within 30 days of the dissemination of the information, or when the requesting person knew or should have known of the dissemination of the information. Such requests shall be documented and tracked in the TVA Communications Complaint Tracking system.
- C. Within 7 working days of receipt of the request for correction, TVA Communications shall issue a notification, by mail, email, or fax to the requesting person acknowledging receipt of the complaint and indicating an evaluation will be performed to determine the merit, if any, of the complaint.
- D. TVA Communications shall ensure that determinations are generally completed, and the requesting person notified, within 60 days of receipt of complaints. If circumstances warrant, TVA may extend this time. Circumstances which may warrant an extension of time include, but are not limited to, the need to review extensive documentation, diverse locations of materials needing review, or the need to consult with officials in diverse locations having a substantial interest in the request. If an extension of time is deemed warranted, the requesting person will be notified by mail, fax or email.
- E. Information shall be corrected when, in TVA's judgment, doing so addresses the needs of TVA and its constituents without disrupting TVA processes. Corrections will only be made to the extent TVA concludes that a correction is appropriate based on the nature and timeliness of the information involved.
- F. If TVA determines that a correction is appropriate, the correction will be made within a reasonable period of time given the extent and nature of the correction required and in a manner consistent with the nature and extent of the complaint.

- G. A denied request may be appealed. The steps to initiate an appeal shall be the same as those for an original request as detailed in 3.2.A-F. Such appeals must be in writing and submitted to External Communications (via TVA's general corporate office mail address, 400 West Summit Hill Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee 37922) which will determine the merit of the request after consulting with the relevant organization and other interested parties as determined by the External Communication organization.
- H. In the event the appeal is determined to have merit, the original review process and the process used to evaluate the original complaint shall be corrected to adequately reflect TVA's position for ensuring objectivity and usefulness of disseminated information. Corrections shall be made, as appropriate, based on the External Communication's determination and issued as specified in step 3.2.F.

3.3 Reporting Complaints

- A. TVA Communications shall use the Complaint Tracking system as the basis of an annual report of complaints. The report shall identify each of the complaints submitted to TVA during the previous Fiscal Year along with a summary of the nature of each complaint and the actions taken to resolve the complaint, including any appeals and subsequent corrective action, if applicable.
- B. The annual report shall be submitted by the TVA Chief Information Officer (CIO) to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, no later than January 1, 2004, for FY 2003, and by January 1st of each subsequent year for succeeding fiscal years.

4.0 RECORDS

4.1 QA Records

None

4.2 Non-QA Records

- A. Annual Report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget
- B. Completed Complaint file

5.0 DEFINITIONS

Quality – an encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity. These four terms may be collectively referred to as “quality”.

Utility – the usefulness of the information to its intended users, including the public.

Objectivity – relates to the presentation of information in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner. This involves whether the information is presented within the proper context.

Integrity – refers to the security of information, protecting it from unauthorized access or revision to ensure that the information is not compromised through corruption or falsification.

Information – any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms. This definition includes information that TVA disseminates from a web page, but does not include the provision of hyperlinks to information that others disseminate. This definition does not include opinions, where TVA’s presentation makes it clear that what is being offered is someone’s opinion rather than fact or TVA’s views.

Information dissemination product– any books, paper, map, machine-readable material, audiovisual production, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, an agency disseminates to the public. This definition includes any electronic document, CD-ROM, or web page.

Dissemination – agency initiated or sponsored distribution of information to the public. Dissemination does not include distribution limited to government employees or agency contractors or grantees; intra- or inter-agency use or sharing of government information; and responses to requests for agency records under the Freedom of Information Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, or other similar law. This definition also does not include distribution limited to correspondence with individuals or persons, press releases, archival records, public filings, subpoenas or adjudicative processes.

Influential – when used in the phrase influential scientific, financial, or statistical information, means that TVA can reasonably determine that dissemination of the information will have or does have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies or important private sector decisions. TVA’s history of information dissemination provides guidance to issues of greatest concern or vulnerability to the agency. These issues should be considered influential for purposes of this guideline. Information is only influential if it is intended for dissemination to the public as defined above.

Reproducibility – means that the information is capable of being substantially reproduced, subject to an acceptable degree of imprecision. For information judged to have more (less) important impacts, the degree of imprecision that is tolerated is reduced (increased). If the agency applies the reproducibility test to specific types of original or supporting data, the associated guidelines shall provide relevant definitions of reproducibility. With respect to analytic results, “capable of being substantially reproduced” means that independent analysis of the original or supporting data using identical methods would generate similar analytic results, subject to an acceptable degree of imprecision or error.

Peer reviewer – a person with the technical or other relevant expertise to judge the quality of government information and determine its usefulness as disseminated information.

Transparent – data and methods that are not obscure and are readily understood by a reasonable person with relevant, e.g. scientific, technical, financial, education and experience.