



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
210 Walnut Street, Room 693  
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

February 8, 2012

IOWA INSTRUCTION 230-388 – SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER (SEPM)s  
COMMUNICATIONS GUIDANCE

IA388.0 PURPOSE

This Iowa Instruction outlines the guidelines SEPMs should use when sending out information concerning their programs. While this policy applies primarily to SEPMs, it can be used by others for approved statewide notifications.

IA388.1 SCOPE

This instruction will be followed by all NRCS employees.

IA388.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/> under the Iowa NRCS eDirectives System section.

/s/

Richard Sims  
State Conservationist

Attachment

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(IA Instruction 230-388 First Edition – February 2012)

*Helping People Help the Land*

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

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2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Iowa's SEPMs play a significant role in carrying out the civil rights policy of the USDA. One of the main ways a SEPM does this is by educating our workforce on the culture and challenges that pertain to the group he or she represents.

3. EXPLANATION:

A SEPM may not use his or her official time, resources, or title to solicit for donations on behalf of another organization. This is in accordance with 5 CFR Part 950, which states that the Combined Federal Campaign is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace. To avoid the appearance of violating the prohibition on monetary solicitations, SEPMs should be careful not to advertently or inadvertently include website links or messages that ask for donations.

While one of the SEPM's duties is to teach the workforce about his or her program, SEPMs should be careful to avoid messages that support or promote political causes that are being considered in the legislative process. This is in accordance with the lobbying restrictions found in 18 USC 1913. Statements endorsing passage of legislation or modification of government policy are prohibited.

When it is necessary to direct employees to a website for purposes of education, the following disclaimer should be used:

"The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Agriculture of the linked websites, or the information, products or services contained therein. Unless otherwise specified, the Department does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. All links are provided with the intent of providing additional information in support of the Special Emphasis Program initiatives."

For USDA guidance regarding lobbying restrictions for federal employees, please visit <http://www.usda-ethics.net/rules/rule9.htm>.

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to Adam Stiegelmeier, State Administrative Officer, at (515) 323-2204.

Approved By:

*/s/*

Richard Sims  
State Conservationist  
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