

CHAPTER 8
ACQUISITION/ESTABLISHMENT OF FIELD CONSTRUCTION OFFICES

8-1. Policy.

a. This chapter provides the HQUSACE policy on the acquisition of field construction offices by districts and Operating MSCs. Project offices for Civil Works projects are to be obtained primarily by use of project funds. Area offices for multiple Civil Works projects should be constructed through the Plant Replacement and Improvement Program (PRIP), or leased using area office overhead account funds. Project offices required for other non-military, non-DOD projects shall also be funded by project appropriations, as a general rule.

(1) Project or area offices required for the management of military-related construction activities should normally be provided or funded by the customer/sponsor of the construction work. Army and Air Force agencies and installations are generally the sponsors for military projects constructed by the Corps. In the interests of efficient and effective construction management, they should provide suitable existing facilities for the management of construction, and for other Corps on-site activities related to installation support. Alternate sources of project or area offices may be used only if the installation or other project sponsor cannot provide suitable facilities. See AR 415-15 for approval requirements where installations cannot provide space.

(2) The use of S&A funds or Area Office Overhead Account funds for construction or purchase of field offices is not permitted. The use of S&A funds for leases or rentals is to be avoided, unless no other alternative is feasible.

b. For military projects, the details concerning the acquisition of field offices should be included in a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed between each district and the supported installations and/or customers; i.e., Army, Air Force or other. Logistical details need to be formalized, such as USACE control of the facilities, and responsibility for maintenance and other related costs. The agreements with Air Force BCES should be part of local MOUs. For Army bases, such an agreement should usually be part of an overall MOU with an installation, and should be based on the DEH-district responsibilities listed in AR 420-10. At some posts, such as those under the Defense Business Operations Fund (DBOF), a district may be charged for its share of such items as security, drug prevention program, fire protection, etc. MOUs for such facilities should be negotiated to include only those services which benefit the particular office.

8-2. **Advance Planning.**

a. Advance planning is required to ensure that suitable office space is available when construction begins. For MILCON projects, office planning should start when a project is being programmed, during the review and certification process at the MSC or District. A long lead-time is usually required to acquire permanent office space at a military installation; the request for space must compete with all others being considered by the installation.

b. As soon as the MSC or district becomes aware of an upcoming project(s), the commander or his agent should request the necessary support facilities. For military projects, requesting correspondence should be sent to the Director of Engineering and Housing or to the Base Civil Engineer, specifying what is needed, and the length of occupancy. District and MSC commanders should insist on good employee working conditions. This is morale factor which could adversely affect the quality of construction, and thus possibly the reputation of the Corps.

c. Civil Works and "Support for Others" projects. Advance planning is necessary, and should begin during project programming, to ensure that suitable facilities are available. If no Corps, military or other government offices are available in the vicinity of the project, then appropriate action must be taken to ensure that funding is provided by the project sponsor. PRIP funds with appropriate authority may be used only when no other source is available.

8-3. **Alternative Sources of Office Space.**

a. In certain cases, the host installation may not be able to provide suitable facilities due to certain circumstances, such as strict budgetary constraints. If this occurs, the following options may be utilized to obtain office space. The size, scope and length of a project determine which options are preferred, use the most feasible one. However, options requiring S&A funds should be considered only as a last resort.

b. An upgrade or a new facility may be included in the project authorization document (DD Form 1391) for the project to be supported. This possibility needs to be considered as part of project planning and programming. When including a field office with a major project, ensure compatibility of facility types to improve chances of approval. For example, inclusion of a permanent office with administrative or mixed use facilities is more likely to be accepted than inclusion with a weapons range or maintenance facility.

c. If the installation cannot provide fixed (permanent) facilities from its inventory, the need for offices should be identified as a requirement in the DD Form 1391, to be paid from construction funds, as either -

(1) on-post office space in relocatable structures, e.g., trailers; or

(2) off-post lease or rental space. Since the lease or rental must be addressed in programming documents to be prepared approximately three years before start of construction, advance planning and coordination with the installation are necessary. These facilities may be obtained by the installation, the district or the construction contractor. If the contractor is to provide the facilities, the construction contract must include a bid item requiring provision of suitable office space.

d. The commander of a military installation may initiate and fund a minor O&M, DBOF or RPMD project (under \$300,000 funded costs) to upgrade substandard facilities.

e. Use of space in Civil Works offices is permitted for military projects when excess space exists. Usage costs are to be charged to the applicable military project(s), and/or to the flat rate S&A accounts as resident/area office charges.

f. New Civil Works office facilities may be acquired with provisions to include space for military projects (MILCON, O&M, RPMD, DBOF, other military reimbursable). These facilities must be funded by the Plant Replacement and Improvement Program (PRIP), and must support primarily multiple Civil Works projects or appropriations. When a new PRIP facility will cost over \$700,000, it must first be approved by Congress, a process requiring approximately two years' lead time. Military project offices may "rent" space in such a building, and must make payments to the PRIP account, based on area occupied, utilities and other operations costs. These cost will be charged proportionately, either directly to the supported military projects, or to the flat rate S&A account.

g. Relocatable buildings for military projects. Relocatable buildings are designed for the specific purpose of being readily moved, erected, disassembled, stored, and reused without structural damage and a minimum of refurbishment. They may be used to provide temporary space, normally less than three years, when these facilities constitute the most practical or economical means of satisfying requirements for nonpermanent facilities. AR 420-18 provides policy and procedures for relocatable buildings summarized as follows:

ER 415-1-16
30 Sep 93

(1) HQUSACE may approve relocatable building leases for up to one year, with total lease fees not to exceed \$50,000. Leases exceeding \$50,000 per year, durations over one year and all purchases must be approved by HQDA. HQDA approval requests must be submitted IAW AR 420-18 to:

Director
US. Army Center for Public Works
ATTN: CECPW-FB-I, Building 358
Fort Belvoir, Va. 22060-5516

(2) Relocatable buildings are normally acquired with Other Procurement Army (OPA) funds, but may also be paid for with other types of funds, provided the fund does not have a prohibition against this purpose. MSCs requesting OPA funds should contact HQUSACE (CERM-B) for current guidance. Relocatable building leases and costs of assembly, maintenance and operation, to include utilities, disassembly, and refurbishment will be charged to the operating funds of the using activity. The real property portions of a relocatable building request (such as site preparations, foundations, exterior utilities, other supporting construction requirements), which are funded costs of a project, are to be executed either as part of the primary project (if approved in DD Form 1391), or as a separate minor construction project, e.g., with the OMA "L" account.

h. Non-Corps, non-installation government facilities. Use of such facilities will be covered with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as described in the Defense Regional Interservice Support (DRIS) Regulation, DOD 4000.19-R, March 1984, supplemented by AR 5-16. This applies to situations such as leasing from General Services Administration or from non-Army DOD agencies. S&A funds shall not be used to pay for leases, unless there is no other alternative, as certified by the District Commander.

i. Leases. This is the least desirable alternative for acquisition of office space, and should generally not be considered. If the other options prove unfeasible, necessary facilities may be leased from commercial sources. An economic analysis must first be performed; if it reveals that it is more effective to lease non-government space, the cost of leasing may be charged to the supported project(s). The S&A account may be used only when no other funds are available. Prior approval by HQUSACE (CERE-A) is required.

8-4. **Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste (HTRW) Removal Projects.** The following guidance is to be followed when obtaining construction office space for environmental, and HTRW removal/remediation projects.

a. EPA Superfund Project funds may only be used to lease or rent facilities, but not to construct or otherwise acquire them for permanent ownership. A contractor may be required to furnish suitable administrative space to Corps personnel as part of the contract.

b. Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS). The situation is similar to that for EPA projects. DOD generally does not permit any fixed/permanent construction at former military installations.

c. Installation Restoration Program (IRP). At active military bases, either temporary or permanent facilities may be acquired, if justified by the scope and expected duration of the project. For construction purposes, treat IRP funds the same as OMA and MILCON. An existing building may be rehabilitated or altered, provided the minor construction cost ("L" account) is below \$300,000. To use IRP project funds, prior coordination must be made between the District and the supported BCE or DEH, who then must include the office requirement when submitting the project cost estimate.

8-5. **Operations and Maintenance Costs.** The operations and maintenance costs of an Area/Resident/Project office are legitimate charges to S&A, provided they do not result in a capital improvement, i.e., over \$5,000 for Civil Works or over \$15,000 for military. Field commanders will ensure that such charges are appropriate for operations (utilities, pro-rated charges from the host for common services, etc.) and maintenance (minor repairs, painting, etc.). Care will be exercised to ensure that capital improvements are not charged as S&A costs. Reimbursable funds provided by the installation or project customer/sponsor are generally the proper source for capital expenses.

8-6. **Restrictions.** Suitable construction office facilities are an essential tool in our effort to deliver a quality product on time and within budget. The Corps has a responsibility to its customers and employees to provide office facilities which will enhance our ability to accomplish our mission. However, some statutory and regulatory restrictions must be observed, as outlined below.

a. The use of S&A funds for construction of office facilities or procurement of capital assets is prohibited.

b. The cost of construction of a military projects office which supports more than a single project cannot be distributed among the projects; all funds for its construction must come from a single UMMCA project or military line item appropriation.

c. The use of S&A funds for rental/lease of office space is discouraged. Provisions of suitable office space should first be the responsibility of the installation or project sponsor. S&A funds should be used only when no other sources are available, and must first be approved in writing by the District Commander.

8-7. **Factors to Consider for Office Suitability.** In acquiring office space, it is necessary to consider those factors which will enhance the morale and productivity of Corps personnel, and provide a work area which will make a positive impression on our customers and other visitors. Listed below are the main factors to consider. Consult appropriate regulations and design guides for detailed, current guidance.

a. Economics - this is one of the Corps' three prime considerations for project planning, in addition to engineering and environment. Costs are an important consideration, especially for those Corps customers who operate under strict budgetary constraints. Avoid extravagance and luxuries. This does not imply that the Corps is to acquire austere or substandard facilities. Proper advance planning allows for construction or rehabilitation of structures which will provide a suitable, pleasant working environment at little additional cost.

b. Environment - ensure that no harmful effects are caused by establishment of an office. The Corps is frequently in the public spotlight on this issue, so forethought in siting and design are necessary for good public relations.

c. Safety & health - provide an area clear of hazardous and toxic materials, and free of animal and insect infestations. Ensure that buildings are structurally sound, and all utilities are adequate and in safe operating condition.

d. Space and furnishings - AR 405-70 Utilization of Real Estate, and DA Pam 420-10 Space Management Guide, provide the basic guidelines for office space requirements and layouts. When applicable, Civil Works offices must conform to the requirements of 41 CFR, Part 101-17 (GSA Temporary Reg D 73).

e. Lighting - check appropriate design criteria for specific requirements. If not available, use the following general criteria: 50 Foot-Candles at work station (i.e., desk); other work areas: 30 Foot-Candles; non-work areas: 10 Foot-candles.

f. Heating, ventilation, air conditioning - ensure adequate fresh air for effective working conditions. Check for "unhealthy" buildings where airborne particles, bacteria, etc., may not be adequately filtered, and insufficient air supply causes drowsiness and lower productivity. If not prescribed otherwise, heating must raise the temperature to 68° F (20° C) in administrative areas, and cooling must lower room temperatures to 79° F (26° C).

g. Acoustics - sound levels should not exceed 47-56 dBA. Use of sound-absorbent materials and furnishings is encouraged.

h. Exterior.

(1) Utilities - plan/design appropriate capacity to meet future demand, to minimize maintenance, and to provide maximum accessibility for repairs. Keep maintenance manuals on-hand for utilities and equipment - this will assist the DEH/BCE with their repair and maintenance responsibilities.

(2) Esthetics and signage - coordinate with the DEH or BCE to ensure conformance with the installation's Master Plan and Design Guide, and/or Community of Excellence program.

(3) Transportation - try to locate the office near public transportation routes, as an alternative to privately-owned vehicles. Ensure adequate parking for official, employee and visitors' vehicles.