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TECHNICAL HANDBOOK FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ENGINEERING  
VOLUME X - DIVISION OF ENGINEERING SERVICES  
**PART 130 - ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

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**CHAPTER 130-1 - MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE DIVISION OF ENGINEERING SERVICES**

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**130-1.1 MISSION**

The mission of the Division of Engineering Services (DES) is to provide the highest quality professional project management, architectural and engineering technical support, code interpretation, acquisition management, leasing, and other related services for the planning, design, and construction of new health care facilities, and the maintenance, alteration, and expansion of existing facilities to provide comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

**130-1.2 HISTORY**

Prior to 1970, the facilities programs in the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW, the predecessor to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)), were administered by 17 separate offices located in various operating divisions of HEW. The facilities programs primarily provided grant and loan funding to assist in education programs and the construction of health care facilities.

In 1970, a HEW task force recommended that a "central construction agency" be formed in the Office of the Secretary (OS) when the ten regions were created to provide departmental leadership, policies, and a focal point for all activities related to the Department's billion dollar annual facilities program. The Regional Office of Facilities Engineering and Construction (ROFEC) was created in response to this recommendation. The ROFECs were located in each of the ten regions and reported to the respective Regional Directors. The ROFEC mission essentially consisted of:

- Real property management, including space acquisition, utilization, maintenance, and repair;
- Technical assistance to grantees (Federally Assisted Program);
- Guidance on operations and maintenance of facilities;
- Guidance on space management;
- Direct Federal leasing activities;
- Administration and oversight of design and construction projects for HEW owned facilities;
- Performing field activities related to federally assisted and direct Federal design and construction; and
- Acting as a technical consultant for all agencies and programs of HEW.

In addition to performing Public Health Service (PHS)/Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities related work, ROFEC staff were also involved in certification of health care facilities for the Health Care Financing Administration (now the Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services); hospital construction under the Federal Housing Administration Sec. 242 program; and Department of Education facility/school projects.

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In 1980, the Department of Education Organization Act (P.L. 96-88) was passed which created a separate Department of Education (DEd) out of HEW and renamed HEW the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The ten ROFECs remained in the regional HHS offices under this reorganization. Since the DEd did not form a facilities component, facilities functions for DEd programs continued through the ROFECs in HHS.

In 1984, in response in part to the recommendations made by the President's Private Sector Survey on cost control (Grace Commission), the Secretary of HHS began streamlining the Office of the Secretary (OS). As a result, the facilities functions were removed from the OS and delegated to each Operating Division. The Social Security Administration (SSA) took over its own facilities-related functions, as did PHS agencies with major centralized construction activities, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Centers for Disease and Control (CDC). Facilities functions for the remaining HHS and PHS agencies (including the IHS), plus the DEd, were consolidated from 10 ROFECs into three offices called Office of Engineering Services (OES), which were located in New York, Dallas, and Seattle.

In 1988, the IHS was elevated to Agency status in the PHS from a Bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and all major facilities design and construction activities for the IHS were consolidated in the Seattle and Dallas OES offices. The OES office in New York was moved within HRSA since most of their workload originated from that agency.

By 1995 most of the Seattle and Dallas OES work was from the IHS health care facility design and construction program and the maintenance and improvement program. The general oversight responsibility for the Seattle and Dallas OES regional offices was then transferred from the OS to IHS. The OS retained the real property and policy oversight functions within the Division of Health Facilities Planning. The Dallas and Seattle OES were also designated as the IHS "Authority Having Jurisdiction" (AHJ) for code interpretation, enforcement, and implementation for the fire/life safety codes with regard to facilities.

In 1997 at the request of the IHS Executive Leadership Group (ELG), the IHS Area Office of Environmental Health and Engineering (OEHE) Associate Directors were tasked to review and evaluate the functions of the Dallas and Seattle OES consistent with the objectives of the Indian Health Design Team report. As a result, in July 1997, a proposal for restructuring the two OES's was presented and approved by the ELG to enhance the Dallas and Seattle OES responsiveness and carry out their functions more effectively.

By the end of 1998 the restructuring of the Dallas and Seattle OES was completed and transfer of recommended full-time equivalents and functions to the 12 Area OEHE's was executed. The two OES's became the Division of Engineering Services (DES-Dallas and DES-Seattle), under the IHS Headquarters OEHE.

Currently, DES (Dallas and Seattle) remains one of the five Divisions within the IHS Headquarters OEHE.