

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN (QASP)
MORTUARY SERVICES FOR UNCLAIMED REMAINS
_____VA MEDICAL CENTER (VAMC)
Contract No: _____

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN (QASP)

1 INTRODUCTION

This QASP is pursuant to the requirements listed in the performance work statement (PWS) Mortuary Services for Unclaimed Human Remains. This plan sets forth the procedures and guidelines the VA will use in ensuring the required performance standards or services levels are achieved by the Contractor.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The purpose of the QASP is to describe the systematic methods used to monitor performance and to identify the required documentation and the resources to be employed. The QASP provides a means for evaluating whether the Contractor is meeting the performance standards/quality levels identified in the PWS and the Contractor's quality control plan (QCP), and to ensure that the Government pays only for the level of services received.

1.1.2 This QASP identifies the performance objectives, defines the methodologies used to monitor and evaluate the Contractor's performance, describes quality assurance documentation requirements, and describes the analysis of quality assurance monitoring results.

1.2 Performance Management Approach

1.2.1 The PWS structures the acquisition around "what" service or quality level is required, as opposed to "how" the Contractor should perform the work (i.e., results, not compliance). This QASP will define the performance management approach taken by the VA to monitor and manage the Contractor's performance to ensure the expected outcomes or performance objectives communicated in the PWS are achieved. Performance management rests on developing a capability to review and analyze information generated through performance assessment. The ability to make decisions based on the analysis of performance data is the cornerstone of performance management; this analysis yields information that indicates whether expected outcomes for the project are being achieved by the Contractor.

1.2.2 Performance management represents a significant shift from the more traditional quality assurance (QA) concepts in several ways. Performance management focuses on assessing whether outcomes are being achieved and to what extent. This approach migrates away from scrutiny of compliance with the processes and practices used to achieve the outcome. A performance-based approach enables the Contractor to play a large role in how the work is performed, as long as the proposed processes are within the stated constraints. The only exceptions to process reviews are those required by law (federal, state, and local) and compelling business situations, such as safety and health. A "results" focus provides the Contractor flexibility to continuously improve and innovate over the course of the contract as long as the critical outcomes expected are being achieved and/or the desired performance levels are being met.

1.3 Performance Management Strategy

1.3.1 The Contractor is responsible for the quality of all work performed. The Contractor measures that quality through the Contractor's own quality control (QC) program. QC is work output, not workers, and therefore includes all work performed under this contract regardless of whether the work is performed by Contractor employees or by subcontractors. The Contractor's QCP will set forth the staffing and procedures for self-inspecting the quality, timeliness, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and other performance requirements in the PWS. The Contractor shall develop and implement a performance management system with processes to assess and report its performance to the designated Government

representative. The Contractor's QCP will set forth the staffing and procedures for self-inspecting the quality, timeliness, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and other performance requirements in the PWS. This QASP enables the Government to take advantage of the Contractor's QC program.

1.3.2 The Government representative(s) will monitor performance and review performance reports furnished by the Contractor to determine how the Contractor is performing against communicated performance objectives. The Contractor will be responsible for making required changes in processes and practices to ensure performance is managed effectively.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Contracting Officer

The Contracting Officer (CO) is responsible for monitoring contract compliance, contract administration, and for resolving any differences between the observations documented by the COR and the Contractor. The CO will designate one full-time COR as the Government authority for performance management. The number of additional representatives serving as technical inspectors depends on the complexity of the services measured, as well as the Contractor's performance, and must be identified and designated by the CO.

2.2 The Contracting Officer's Representative

The COR is designated in writing by the CO to act as his or her authorized representative to assist in administering a contract. COR limitations are contained in the written appointment letter. The COR is responsible for technical administration of the project and ensures proper Government surveillance of the Contractor's performance. The COR is not empowered to make any contractual commitments or to authorize any contractual changes on the Government's behalf. Any changes that the Contractor deems may affect contract price, terms, or conditions shall be referred to the CO for action. The COR will have the responsibility for completing QA monitoring forms used to document the inspection and evaluation of the Contractor's work performance. Government surveillance may occur under the inspection of services clause for any service relating to the contract.

3 REQUIRED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/QUALITY LEVELS

The required performance standards and/or quality levels are included in the "Performance Requirements Summary." the Contractor meets the required service or performance level, it will be paid the amount agreed on in the contract. Failure to meet the required service or performance level can result in a reduction in the amount paid to the Contractor.

4 METHODOLOGIES TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE

4.1 Surveillance Techniques

In an effort to minimize the performance management burden, simplified surveillance methods shall be used by the Government to evaluate Contractor performance when appropriate. The primary methods of surveillance are (include those that apply)

- Random monitoring, which shall be performed by the COR or a designated inspector.
- 100% Inspection – Each month, the COR, shall review the generated documentation and enter summary results into the Surveillance Activity Checklist.
- Periodic Inspection –COR typically performs the periodic inspection on a monthly basis.

4.2 Customer Feedback

The Contractor is expected to establish and maintain professional communication between its employees and customers. The primary objective of this communication is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is the most significant external indicator of the success and effectiveness of all services provided and can be measured through customer complaints.

Performance management drives the Contractor to be customer focused through initially and internally addressing customer complaints and investigating the issues and/or problems but the customer always has the option to communicate complaints to the CO and COR as opposed to the Contractor.

Customer complaints, to be considered valid, must set forth clearly and in writing the detailed nature of the complaint and must be forwarded to the CO and/or COR. The CO or COR will accept those customer complaints and investigate.

4.3 Acceptable Quality Levels

The acceptable quality levels (AQLs) included in the Performance Requirements Summary Table, for Contractor performance are structured to allow the Contractor to manage how the work is performed while providing negative incentives for performance shortfalls.

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENTATION

5.1 The Performance Management Feedback Loop

The performance management feedback loop begins with the communication of expected outcomes. Performance standards are expressed in the PWS and are assessed using the performance monitoring techniques shown in Attachment 1.

5.2 Documentation

The Government's QA surveillance, accomplished by the COR, will be documented by the COR via memo and the results provided to the CO. The COR's documentation will serve as record of the Government's assessment of the Contractor's performance under the contract to ensure that the required results are being achieved. The COR and CO will retain a copy of all completed QA surveillance forms.

6 ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

6.1 Determining Performance

The Government shall use the monitoring methods cited to determine whether the performance standards/service levels/AQLs have been met. If the Contractor has not met the minimum requirements, it may be asked to develop a corrective action plan to show how and by what date it intends to bring performance up to the required levels.

6.2 Reporting

At the end of each quarter (or more frequently if needed), the COR will prepare a written report for the CO summarizing the overall results of the quality assurance surveillance of the Contractor's performance. This will enable the government to demonstrate whether the Contractor is meeting the stated objectives and/or performance standards, including cost/technical/scheduling objectives.

6.3 Reviews and Resolution

6.3.1 The CO may require the Contractor's project manager, or a designated alternate, to meet with the COR and other Government personnel as deemed necessary to discuss performance. If the need arises,

the Contractor will meet with the CO and or COR as often as required or per the Contractor's request. The agenda of the reviews may include:

- Performance assessment data
- Issues and concerns of both parties
- Projected outlook for upcoming months and progress against expected trends, including a corrective action plan where needed
- Recommendations for improved efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Issues arising from the performance monitoring processes

6.3.2 The COR will communicate with the Contractor to resolve issues and concerns regarding marginal or unacceptable performance.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Required Services (Tasks)	Performance Standards	Acceptable Quality Levels	Methods of Surveillance	Incentive (Positive and/or Negative) (Impact on Contractor Payments)
Remains are appropriately prepared and stored at 30-40 degrees Fahrenheit (PWS Ref. Para 4.2 and 5.3)	100%	100%	Inspection of remains prior to burial; customer complaints	Impact on Contractor's performance assessment; invoice denied
The casket provided is the appropriate size, material, is not leaking, has fixed rails or swing arm handles and holds the weight of the decedent's remains (PWS Ref. Para 4.7)	100%	100%	Inspection prior to burial; complaints	Impact on Contractor's performance assessment; denial of reimbursement for casket; possibility future orders will not be placed against contract
For cremation, the urn provided is made of durable plastic, metal, wood or ceramic and is sealed, not leaking and has certification for cremation of the decedent. (PWS Ref. Para 4.7.2)	100%	100%	Inspection prior to burial; complaints	Impact on Contractor's performance assessment; denial of reimbursement for urn; possibility future orders will not be placed against contract
Remains are completely dispositioned in accordance with the contract within 7 days of delivery of awarded Task Order to the Contractor. (PWS Ref. Para 3.4)	100%	100%	Customer complaints	Impact on Contractor's performance assessment; possibility future orders will not be placed against contract