

Categorical Exclusions: When to Document / Exercise 2

MEAGAN: Remember that if your proposed action is on a list of CXs, you must review the extraordinary circumstances to see if any apply. Consider the overall scope and scale of the action when deciding who should be involved in reviewing the action for extraordinary circumstances. This may also be helpful in determining whether or not public involvement may be desirable.

Consider an inner disciplinary team approach. The inner disciplinary approach can be a great way to achieve inner office communication and coordination and tap into the expertise of your specialists.

If an extraordinary circumstance would be triggered, you have a few options. First, you could choose to prepare an EA or an EIS. You could also modify the action such that it wouldn't trigger any of the extraordinary circumstances. You may do this by building project design features into the proposed action.

Lastly, you could also decide not to pursue the action.

JOLIE: Thanks, Meagan. If the action is on the CX list and no extraordinary circumstances apply, then you need to decide the appropriate documentation for that action.

If actions have no effect or negligible effect on the environment, then you typically don't need to document which CX applies. And then you also don't need to document the extraordinary circumstances review.

These are some examples of actions that aren't typically documented. Payroll actions, we don't typically document those. Nondestructive data collection, such as surveying, usually those aren't documented. And replacing signs, that's another action that we usually don't document.

However, there are some actions that we do document. We document actions when they may have some environmental effect. When an action has some environmental effect, that's when we need to document that using a CX documentation form.

Some examples of actions that are typically documented include precommercial thinning of forests, issuance of short term rights-of-way, placement of temporary portable corrals. All three of those examples would have some kind of an effect on the environment.

If you document which CX applies, then you must use the form in Appendix 6 in the NEPA Handbook. Before we go into that more, let's do an exercise.

CATHY: Now, open your participant guide to Exercise 2. You are going to look at the actions that are covered by a CX category from Exercise 1, and you will decide whether they should be documented. So pause the video. Complete the exercise, and then hit play to check your answers with ours.

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JOLIE: Okay. Let's see how your answers compared with our answers. For the first one, stream temperature monitoring. No documentation is typically required for that action since there would be negligible environmental effect.

Number two, removal of hazard trees in a campground. You probably should document that one since this could have some environmental effect, however, it could depend on the number of trees being removed or other impacts such as wildlife that could be impacted by that action.

Number three, cash award for an employee. No documentation is needed for that. Sale of firewood permits. You would probably want to document that since this could have some environmental effect and it involves the sale of BLM-managed resources. In this case, documentation provides a good record to support your decision.

Number five, approving a permit for a day-long endurance horse race. You should probably document this since it could have some environmental effect. Again, it provides a good record to support your decision.

Number six, approving a one eighth mile right-of-way for Mr. Smith to access his private end holding. You should probably document this one too, especially if the access required involved some kind of road construction.

Now you should have a better idea of which categorically excluded actions need documentation.