Rhode Island Police Accreditation Commission (RIPAC) User Resource Guide in PowerDMS

The Rhode Island Police Accreditation Commission (RIPAC) has teamed up with PowerDMS to provide RIPAC Standards in an electronic format through PowerDMS Standards. These guidelines are best practice ***recommendations*** and, if followed, can enhance the review process for both the agency and RIPAC Assessors.

The RIPAC Standards Manual

Your RIPAC Standards Manual must be downloaded to your PowerDMS site. Only one user should download the standards manual. Once downloaded, the standards manual will populate in PowerDMS for all designated users. This is a two-step process. You must download the manual before you can build your first assessment.

Step 1:

a. Navigate to your **Administration Menu**, located in the "**Welcome, *Name***" dropdown menu.

b. Locate "*Standards Manual Communities*" in the list of items in the Administration Menu.

c. Click "Standards Manual Communities" and locate the RIPAC community on the table (you may need to navigate through the pages. All accrediting bodies are in alphabetical order).

d. Click **Request Membership**

A representative from RIPAC will approve your access request to the RIPAC Community, which will trigger an email informing you that your request for membership has been approved. Please allow up to 24 hours or the next business day for completion of Step 1. Step 1 must be complete before advancing to Step 2.

Step 2:

a. Navigate to your **Administration Menu**, located in the "**Welcome, *Name***" dropdown menu.

b. Locate "Standards Manual Communities" in the list of items in the Administration Menu.

c. Click "Standards Manual Communities" and locate RIPAC, which will be at the top of the list on the first page.

d. Click then click Subscribe next to the applicable manual.

Please allow at least an hour for the manual to download to your PowerDMS site. Once downloaded, you are ready to Create your Assessment.

Click HERE for a Video on Subscribing to your Standards Manual or HERE for the article. Click HERE for how to open an assessment.

Naming of Assessments

When naming your assessment, add the manual acronym and the start *and* end month/year of your audit cycle.

Example: RIPAC May 2021 – May 2024

Naming Conventions, Definitions, Labels, etc.

1. Attachment Naming Conventions

All attachments should have a prefix and a brief description of the document. Prefixes act as "keywords" that benefit you as you build your assessment. First, they inform your RIPAC assessors about the type of document they are reviewing. Second, they simplify searching, filtering, and copying attachments from one assessment cycle to the next.

Agencies should select a prefix for their documents that guide practices (i.e., policy and procedures) and a prefix for those documents that prove compliance to the standards (i.e., annual report).

The key is to be consistent in how you use prefixes throughout your assessment. To assist you, we have developed the following attachment prefixes:

- WD – Written Directive
- PROOF – Proof of Compliance

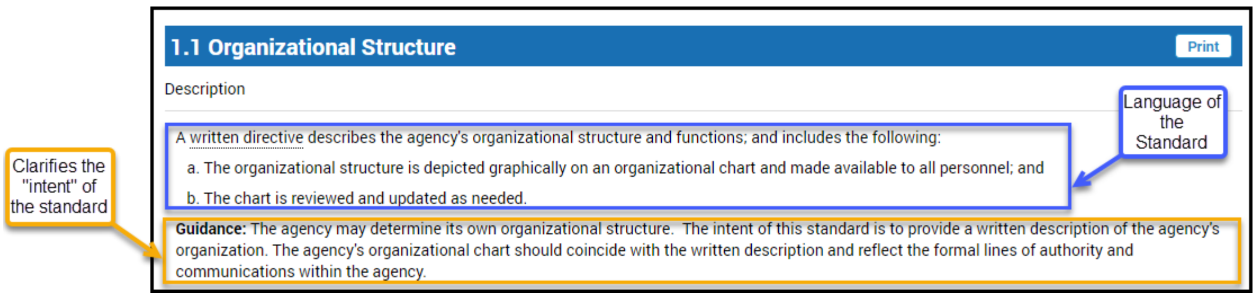
Prefixes for Simple Notes make searching, filtering, and copying these simple notes easy. We recommend using the following prefixes for Simple Notes:

- INT – Interview
- OBSV – Observe
- NO – Non-occurrence
- NA – Not Applicable by Size / Function

2. Definitions

- Written Directive: Written directives can be policy, plan, procedure, rule or regulation, general or special order, post order, training directive, contracts, city / county / state personnel rules, state or federal laws, or other document that is binding upon agency personnel. The form of the written directive can be what the agency has determined best fits its quality management system.

- Proofs of Compliance: Proofs of compliance can be intra-departmental memorandum, computer printouts, screen shots, job descriptions, letters from citizens, photographs, videos, rosters, forms, investigative reports, newspaper clippings, budget documents and logs, and other evidence that can be examined periodically and continuously to determine that practices are being properly implemented.
- Guidance: In PowerDMS, the guidance statement (located below the language of the standard) identifies the specific intent, or the spirit, of the standard. The guidance statement is intended to provide you with guidance on how to comply with the standard. It is important to understand that your agency is responsible for proving compliance with the standard, not the guidance statement.



3. Order of Presentation

The order of presentation should be in a logical order in terms of attachment types and the year of the assessment cycle.

TIP: Present WD documentation first, then PROOFS (by year with the oldest year on top), then any Simple Notes.

Example:

1. WD
2. PROOF
3. Simple Notes

4. Labels

- Label attachments with the agency's preferred prefixes and a brief description of the document.

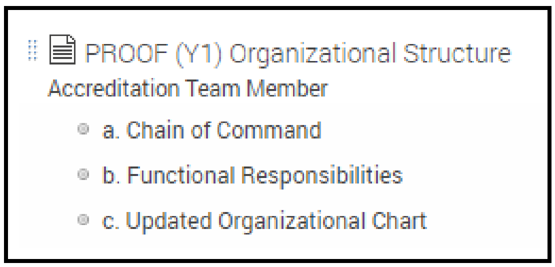
Example of a Written Directive: **WD: Policy and Procedure**

- Labels for PROOFS should include the assessment year of the documentation.

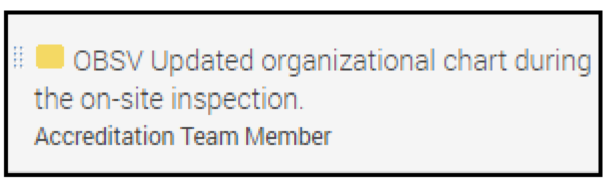
  Example of a PROOF: **PROOF (Y1) Mission Statement Review Log**

- Label highlights with language that informs the assessor what information is contained in the highlighted material.

- For bulleted standards, label highlights with the bullet letter or number and a brief description of highlighted material.

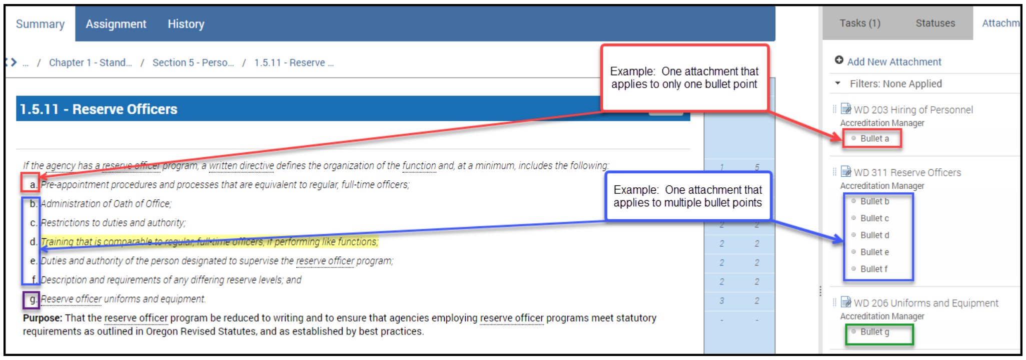


- Label Simple Notes with a prefix identified above and any justifications or additional information that the assessor may need.



5. <u>Standards with Bullet Points</u>

PowerDMS recommends attaching a document only once to the standard. When you add the attachment, you will see checkboxes next to the standard root and each bullet point. You must select at least one checkbox next to the standard. PowerDMS recommends “anchoring” the attachment to the standards statement and “mapping” highlights to all applicable bullet points. This process ensures attachments copy appropriately when updates are made to the standards manual.



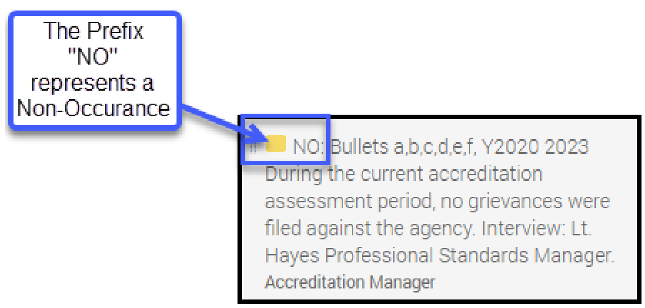
6. Best Practice for Simple Notes

In PowerDMS a simple note is an attachment type that can be used to provide RIPAC assessors with additional information about the WD or PROOFs used to document compliance with the standard.

RIPAC approves the use of Simple Notes in lieu of Memoranda for:

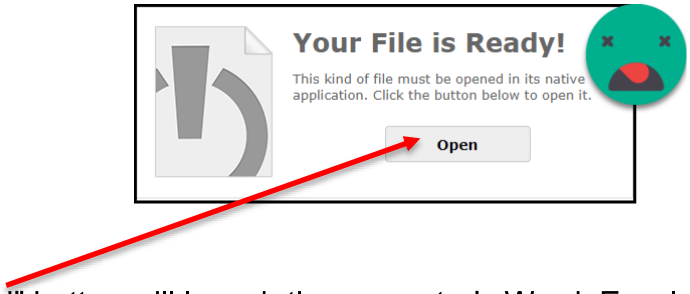
- Not Applicable by Function
- A Non-Occurrence of the standard during the assessment year
- Guidance for RIPAC Assessors on Interviews (i.e., names, phone numbers, email addresses)
- Guidance for RIPAC Assessors on key Observations during the onsite visit

Simple notes allow accreditation managers to explain, justify, or detail anything they wish to communicate to assessors. If a standard is Not Applicable by Size or Function r a Non-Occurrence, the accreditation manager must provide a full explanatory justification why the prefix (NA or NO) was selected.



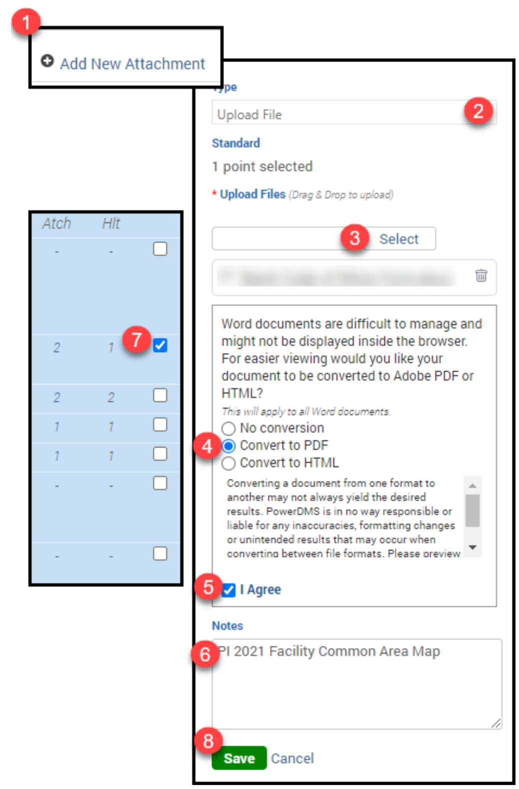
7. Best Practice for Attaching Uploaded Files

PowerDMS allows for any file type (i.e., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, PNG, etc.) to be attached to a standard as an “Upload File” attachment type. However, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint file types will not be viewable as documents in the assessment. In fact, your assessor will see:



Clicking the “OPEN” button will launch the computer’s Word, Excel, or PowerPoint application and open the document. You will not be able to use PowerDMS’ highlighting tool, and you risk the auditor downloading your proprietary (and possibly) confidential document.

PowerDMS recommends you convert these file types to a PDF format as you attach them to the assessment by following these steps.



1. Click “Add New Attachment”
2. Select “Upload File” from the dropdown list
3. Select the file by browsing your computer files or dragging and dropping the file into the box indicated
4. If a Word, Excel, or PowerPoint file is uploaded, a pop-up box appears. Select “Convert to PDF” as seen in the picture. When you select “Convert to PDF,” the box will expand and “I Agree” appears at the bottom in blue lettering. You **MUST** select “I Agree” to continue with the conversion.
5. Check “I Agree”
6. If the title of the document needs editing to adhere to the best practices outlined in this resource guide for prefixes and labeling, edit the text that appears in the **NOTES** field, directly below the conversion pop-up box.
7. Ensure the uploaded file is anchored to the standard statement (see Section 5. Bulleted Standards).
8. Click 

Your Word, Excel, or PowerPoint document will now display correctly and allow you to use the PowerDMS highlight tool.

8. Helpful Links

- How to Highlight documents
- How to Archive past assessments
- How to Copy Attachments and Tasks to a new assessment

Best Practice for Assessment Roles

PowerDMS has four Roles for use in a RIPAC assessment: Accreditation Manager, Accreditation Team, Mock Assessor, and RIPAC Assessor. These Roles provide you with the ability to include all Subject Matter Experts, accreditation team members, and the agency project manager to upload compliance documentation to each standard and conduct reviews of the files in a single location. The RIPAC Assessor role will allow your RIPAC assessors to set a compliance status directly to your assessment. When you add attachments to your assessment, you MUST select a Role before PowerDMS will save the attachment. We do this so you can control which attachments you want your RIPAC assessors to review during your audit.

Note: Roles are not job titles or agency job functions! A good way to understand assessment roles is to think of them as different sections of a file folder or a way to conduct multiple reviews of an assessment (i.e., Chief, Assistant Chief, or city personnel reviews). You are in control of how users interact with compliance documentation.

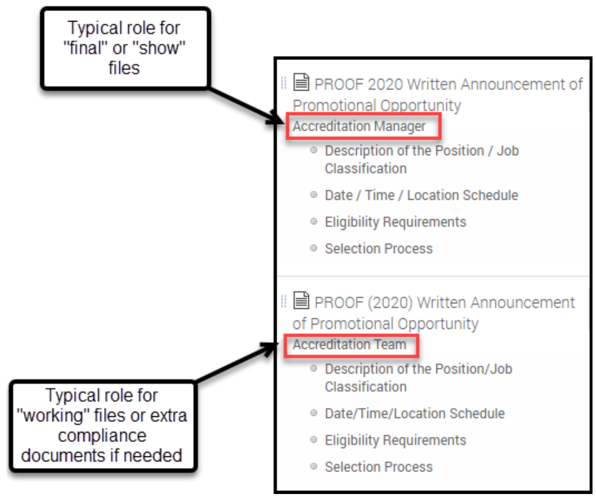
When you assign users, RIPAC assessors, or yourself to an assessment, you select a Role and participation responsibilities to that Role. This means you are granting these individuals permission to either add or merely observe attachments in that Role.

To assist you with understanding Roles, we have provided the following definitions:

1. Accreditation Team (working files): Attachments to this role are not reviewed by the RIPAC assessor, but act as a repository for compliance documentation that ***may*** be used to show compliance during the file review. Below are some reasons to use this role:
    a. You have other people collecting documentation for you and you will need to review the compliance document before approving it for the file review;
    b. You collect extra documentation for your final assessment, just in case the RIPAC assessor asks for supplemental documentation; and
    c. You do not want other users assigned to the assessment to access the documentation your RIPAC assessors will review.
2. Accreditation Manager (show files): Attachments to this role are reviewed by the RIPAC assessor during the file review portion of the assessment. This role houses the *show* documents that demonstrate the facility's compliance with RIPAC standards.
3. Mock Assessor: This role is reserved for the mock assessment team. This role allows for the agency's mock assessors to give feedback on the assessment and conduct a mock audit. The RIPAC assessor will not "see" any notes or status from the Mock Assessor.

Ultimately, the use of Roles is your choice. However, PowerDMS recommends the following:

1. Select the Accreditation Manager role for all written directive and proof attachments you want your RIPAC assessor to review.
2. Only assign agency users who are responsible for the facility's RIPAC assessment to the Accreditation Manager role to <u>participate</u>. You may wish to give <u>observe</u> responsibilities to other agency personnel so they can see which attachments will be shown to the RIPAC assessors. Your RIPAC assessors ***MUST*** have <u>observe</u> rights to the Accreditation Manager role.
3. Have agency users who help you collect documentation add attachments to the Accreditation Team role. Once you review the attachments and approve them for file review, change the role of the attachment to the Accreditation Manager role.



4. Use the Accreditation Team role for any subject matter expert, or other agency personnel, who needs to provide documentation for audit.
5. Use the Mock Assessor role to conduct mock audits or comprehensive oversight to the assessment.
6. Use the Final Assessor role for the assigned ALEAP assessors.

Preparing for RIPAC Assessments

To prepare for your RIPAC assessment, you will need to add your RIPAC assessors to your PowerDMS assessment. In PowerDMS it is also best practice to use group to manage your users, even users that will be in your site temporarily (i.e., RIPAC assessors).

To add a new user for the RIPAC assessment:

- Create a group for your RIPAC assessors (if one has not been created already). The name of the group is your agency's decision. Navigate to the **NEW** create dropdown menu at the top of your homepage and select ***Group***. Give the Group a name and click **Save**

  Example Group Name: RIPAC Assessors

- Using the triple dot menu to the right of the group's name, select *Add User* from the dropdown menu.
- Complete the required fields on the New User page. Required fields include First Name, Last Name, and Username. You will need to create a password for your assessors. You also have

the option of entering an END DATE. The end date will archive the user automatically, freeing up a user license. These steps will create the user directly into the appropriate group.

- You will need to email the RIPAC assessor(s) and provide the login credentials (Site Key, Username, and Password).

The following steps outline best practices for adding your RIPAC assessors to your assessment. These practices are necessary to ensure the RIPAC assessors can review your final compliance documentation while having the ability to add simple notes and set a final compliance status to your assessment.

Step 1: Navigate to your assessment and click on the root of the standards manual.

Step 2: Click on the "Assignments" tab

Step 3: Click ***Add New Assignment***

Step 4: In the **User / Group** dropdown field, type the group name you created for your RIPAC assessors and select the group from the dropdown menu to populate the field.

Step 5: In the **Role** dropdown field, select *RIPAC Assessor* from the list.

Step 6: In the **Responsibility** dropdown field, select *Participate* from the list.

Step 7: Click **Save**

Step 8: Click ***Add New Assignment***

Step 9: In the **User / Group** dropdown field, type the group name you created for your RIPAC assessors and select the group from the dropdown menu to populate the field. This is the same group you added to the RIPAC Assessor role in steps 4 – 6 above.

Step 10: In the **Role** dropdown field, select *Accreditation Manager* from the list.

Step 11: In the **Responsibility** dropdown field, select *Observe* from the list.

Step 12: Click **Save**

Your RIPAC assessors **MUST** have the ability to PARTICIPATE in the RIPAC Assessor role to set status, clear tasks, and add simple notes. Your RIPAC assessors **MUST** have the ability to OBSERVE the role all your attachments are in, which is recommended to be the Accreditation Manager role.

More information on adding your RIPAC assessors to your assessment is found in the article, Preparing for Mock and Final Assessments, located within the PowerDMS Success Community.

Archiving the Assessment

Do not archive the assessment until the final report is delivered from RIPAC. If your agency has only one assessment license, consider using your folders to house your compliance documents until you can archive your assessment and open a new assessment.

To archive an assessment, refer to the article, Archiving your Assessment, in the PowerDMS Success Community.

Tips for Empowering Assessment Continuity

One of the most difficult job functions within an agency is to establish continuity for an accreditation program. As agency accreditation managers change, the accreditation process used to achieve an award of accreditation changes. PowerDMS has the tools, regardless of the modules your agency purchased, to establish continuity for your accreditation process. Use the PowerDMS features below as suggestions to maintain continuity for your agency's accreditation program.

1. **Folders.** You have the freedom to build a folder structure not only to house your policy manual but also to house your compliance documentation. Housing your process indicators or secondary documentation within PowerDMS serves many functions to promote accreditation program continuity. Below are a few examples:
    a. Encourage agency personnel to upload the proof as a document into an assigned folder in lieu of email or using a shared drive. ALL PowerDMS agencies have access to house as many documents as desired in PowerDMS!
    b. Create historical records for your process indicators using folders. This will enable users to reference previous compliance documentation without providing administrative rights to an achieved assessment.
    c. These documents may undergo a workflow for approval or as a reminder for time sensitive standards.
2. **Certificates.** Use this versatile feature to track equipment, driver's licenses, fleet vehicles, etc. Or use them as a reminder to document a time sensitive standard.
3. **Review Workflows**. Review workflows not only remind policy writers to review documents for validity but also remind accreditation managers of time sensitive standards.
4. **Courses**. Accreditation Manager training can be built specific to an agency's accreditation program using PowerDMS courses. These courses may be assigned to any user. You can also create trainings on how to upload a proof to a folder and how to identify a good proof of compliance.

5. **<u>Survey</u>**. Surveys are great instruments for gathering input for policy development.

6. **<u>Tests</u>**. Tests may be attached to a policy to test document knowledge. Tests promote policy knowledge and are another step for agency indemnification when faced with complaints or legal action.